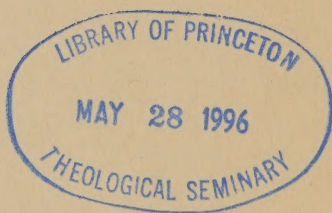




A CHURCH IS PLANTED

EMEROY JOHNSON

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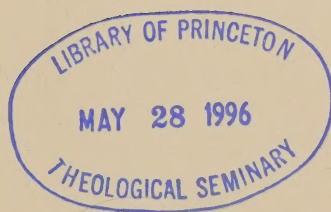
Minneapolis
July '53

A CHURCH IS PLANTED

THE STORY OF THE
LUTHERAN MINNESOTA CONFERENCE

1851-1876

BY EMEROY JOHNSON



1948

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To The
Memory of The Pioneers



Dr. P. O. Bersell, President of the Lutheran Augustana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod

In 1848 a little group of Lutheran immigrants at New Sweden, Iowa, banded themselves together as a congregation. Since no ordained pastor was available at the time, they called one of their own men, a God-fearing shoemaker, to preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments. This was the first of some thirty-five congregations which in 1860 organized the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod. Fifteen of these were in Minnesota.

Now as the Synod observes its Centennial it has 1,175 congregations with more than 400,000 members. It carries on an extensive program of home and foreign missions, Christian education, and institutional charity work.

Dr. P. O. Bersell has served as President of the Augustana Synod since 1935.

Synodical headquarters are at 2445 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Privilege of Belonging to the Church

On a beautiful Sunday morning I sat in a great church in a city that had a population of fifty thousand. The seating capacity of the church was easily fifteen hundred. There were ninety worshippers present for the communion service.

The officiating pastor sang and read the beautiful Lutheran liturgy and preached an orthodox Gospel sermon. The organ music was magnificent but the audible participation of the congregation was weak. Only thirty-two people responded to the invitation to come to the Lord's table.

Surely God was present in this service in the Word and Sacrament. Christ was here in the power of His Spirit and the richness of His grace to satisfy the seeking soul. But something was lacking to "make the picture complete."

On another glorious Sunday morning I sat in a large village church. It was also a communion service. There were at least a thousand worshippers present, about one half of them in colorful peasant garb.

The Lutheran liturgy was sung and read with solemnity and the sermon was a simple, heart-to-heart homily. The congregation lifted its voice with power in the chorales and hundreds knelt reverently at the Lord's table.

Surely God was present in this service in the Word and Sacrament. Christ was here in the power of His Spirit and the richness of His grace to satisfy the seeking soul. But in comparison with the first-mentioned service there was a "plus" in this service, a human element that made it complete. For here was a response on the part of the congregation. Here was an evidence of the reality and power of the Church. It was soul-stirring and faith-strengthening.

Without question the grace of God is sovereign and is not dependent upon any human adjuncts or mediation. The Church of Jesus Christ existed in the heart of God before there was any human organization. But it is completed in the human acceptance in faith and the embodiment of that which we confess—"I believe in the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of saints."

There is a question in the Bible, "Will a man rob God?" Usually we think of its application in terms of earthly possessions and the shar-

ing of these with God in the work of His kingdom on earth. But there is a prime application, even more important. Will any man rob God of that which He most desires? That is man's own self, his personality, his heart and soul.

We rob God when we withhold from Him that for which Christ died on the cross. But we rob ourselves also of peace and joy and eternal salvation.

Church membership is not, of itself, a guarantee of salvation. But it is a confession, before God and men of our allegiance to Christ and of our faith in His saving power and of our need of the means of grace and of our desire to participate with other Christians in the blessings, privileges, and duties of membership in the Church, the institution divinely founded for our salvation.

Conversely, proud and stubborn refusal to share in church membership is a denial of the faith, a denial of God, of Christ and His salvation. What a pity that millions of people who have been baptized and even confirmed, souls that have been sought and instructed, do not realize this, thus needlessly robbing themselves of the best in life, the one thing needful!

Living church membership, with humble, faithful participation in the worship, the life, the world service of the Body of Christ, the Bride for whom He died and rose again and in whom He lives for the salvation of the world is the highest fulfilment of our human and eternal destiny.

Through the ages, hundreds of millions have thus been prepared for participation in the perfect worship of God in eternal bliss. Millions are doing it now, thus making glad the heart of God. Are you one of them?

P. O. BERSELL, President
Lutheran Augustana Synod



*Dr. Emil Swenson, President of the Lutheran
Minnesota Conference.*

Foreword

Yea, I have a goodly heritage.
Psalm 16:6

In taking a retrospect of the past ninety years, the Minnesota Conference without fear of contradiction exclaims: "I have a goodly heritage." Love towards Christ and His Church also constrains to preserve and transmit to coming generations a history of the beginnings and early development of Lutheranism in the great Northwest.

The Minnesota Conference at one time included all of Minnesota, North and South Dakota, a large part of Canada, and western Wisconsin. Looking back over ninety years of history the sense of a goodly heritage deepens with the years. This heritage, transplanted to America from across the sea, began to assume form as the pioneer pastor gathered the people and organized congregations. The sustaining strength of the Church is not in its institutions but is imbedded in the local congregation. The pioneer pastors strengthened the Church by building strong local units. There were only thirteen congregations with a membership of nine hundred served by five pastors when the Conference was organized in October, 1858. I cannot refrain quoting from an address delivered by Rev. Eric Norelius at the twenty-fifth anniversary festivities of the Conference.

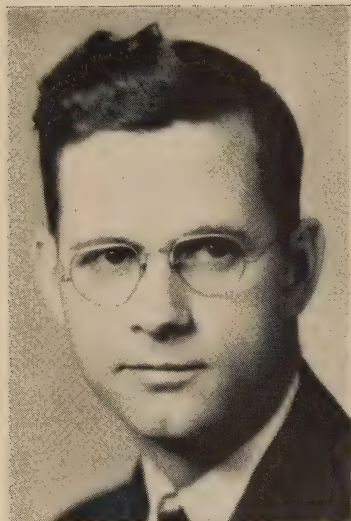
"I have attended numerous meetings where larger audiences were in attendance, but I have never witnessed such seriousness, deep interest, and inspiration as characterized this our first meeting. It was not just something new but a spiritual breeze had begun to take hold of our congregations everywhere. There was a sense of holiness, a spiritual concern which penetrated every part of the meeting. At the same time we experienced much joy. We felt that we had come a long way in our spiritual development when we could organize our own conference. We gave absolutely no thought to the difficulties which might confront us in future days."

Constrained by the love of Christ and "taking no thought of future difficulties," the Lutheran pioneers in Minnesota not only organized congregations but also established missions and educational and charitable enterprises. Every pastor in the early days spent as much time in

prospective home mission fields as he did in his own parish. The Conference increased from thirteen congregations at the time of organization to 145 at the twenty-fifth anniversary in 1883, having at that time a communicant membership of 18,000. The growth was quite rapid and it was realized that the area was too large for one conference. A reduction in area as well as membership came when the Red River Valley Conference was organized in 1912; the Canada Conference in 1913; and in 1941 North Dakota was also given to the Red River Valley Conference by mutual agreement. The Minnesota Conference has, according to latest statistics, 310 congregations with a communicant membership of 86,523 and 31,820 children, making a total of 118,343. The value of all church properties is listed at \$7,007,500, and the total expenditures for all purposes in 1946 was \$2,175,861.47. Even in the matter of growth, we can repeat the words of the Psalmist, "Yea, I have a goodly heritage."

The zeal for home missions created a need for more pastors, thereby making necessary the launching of the educational program when the Conference was only four years old, which constituted the beginning of what is now Gustavus Adolphus College. With an appropriation of \$20.00 the school was opened in the month of October, 1862, in the church at Red Wing under the direction of the Rev. Eric Norelius. The first day witnessed the enrollment of one pupil, but by the end of the year this number had increased to eleven. The college remained at Red Wing until 1863 when it was moved to East Union which was its home until 1876; it was again moved, this time to St. Peter, where it has grown to be one of the strong Lutheran colleges in the Northwest. From a small beginning of only eleven students in 1862, there were in 1947, 1,261 students enrolled and the property valuation including real estate, buildings, and endowments, according to latest audit, was set at \$1,780,280. Truly, a heritage has been delivered to the present generation.

If a church is to live and grow it must have the pulse beat of charity, a compassion for the aged, the sick, and under-privileged children. The manifestation of a real need often creates a program of charity. It was in 1865 the Rev. Eric Norelius was confronted by an emergency which caused him to plan a children's home. Four children of an immigrant family were suddenly bereft of their parents and practically abandoned as far as Christian care was concerned. Rev. Norelius offered to take charge of the children, bringing them to Vasa, where his beloved



*Dr. Edgar Carlson, President of Gustavus Adolphus College
Dr. L. B. Benson, General Superintendent of the Institutions of Mercy
of the Minnesota Conference*

wife already laden with household cares and responsibilities assumed care of these unfortunate ones, thus becoming the first matron of the children's homes in the Conference. Later, temporary quarters were arranged in the basement of the church in which the children were housed for some time under the supervision of Brita Nelson, known as "Moster Brita," as she was affectionately called. Out of this small beginning an extensive program of charity has come to be a reality. The institutions owned and maintained by the Conference are as follows: Vasa Children's Home, Red Wing; Bethesda Home for the Aged, Chicago City; Bethany Children's Home, Duluth; Lakeshore Home for the Aged, Duluth; Mankato Home for the Aged, Mankato; Bethesda Hospital, St. Paul; Bethesda Home for Invalids, St. Paul; and Trinity Hospital, Ashland, Wisconsin. At present there are 227 guests in the homes for aged and seventy-six children are given care and shelter in the children's homes. The total value represents an investment of \$1,972,162.36. It should also be mentioned that aside from these cooperative enterprises operated by the Conference, one of its congregations, the Augustana Church, Minneapolis, has been engaged in inner mis-



Executive Committee of the Minnesota Conference, 1947. Sitting, left to right: Rev. Emory Johnson, secretary; Dr. Paul H. Andreen, vice president; Dr. Emil Swenson, president; Mr. Christopher Hoff, treasurer; Rev. Carl G. Anderson, regional director of home missions; Rev. Thomas W. Wersell, assistant regional director. Standing, left to right, Rev. Harold E. Peterson, Rev. O. E. Olmon, Mr. Carl Lund, Rev. Arthur W. Knock, Mr. Clifford Dahlin, Mr. Carl Jackson.

sion work since 1896. At present this congregation alone supports a home for aged, a hospice for young women, and a children's home, the total investment representing a sum of \$375,000.00. Again, we voice the sentiment of the Psalmist, "Yea, I have a goodly heritage."

The Foreword to this historical volume would not be complete unless attention is called to the interest manifested in foreign missions. A group constrained to extend the kingdom of Christ "to the uttermost part of the earth" met on September 3-4, 1901, in the Bethlehem Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, to inaugurate a definite program to preach the gospel to "nations that walk in darkness and that dwell in the land of the shadow of death." It is significant to note that Dr. P. A. Mattson, president of the Minnesota Conference for twenty-six years, served as the first president of this organization which became known as the "China Mission Society." It was through this Society that Rev. A. W. Edwins was called as the pioneer missionary of the Augustana Synod to open a new field in China. This call was accepted when the organization met for its first annual meeting in Center City, Minnesota, February 13-14, 1905. This program of foreign missions was taken over by the Synod at its annual meeting in Chicago, 1908. The Minnesota Conference at its ninetieth anniversary thanks God for the blessings which have accrued to Conference in being chosen to project an enlarged program of missions that has richly blessed the entire Synod. "Yea, I have a goodly heritage."

May this volume serve as a means to increase appreciation of our heritage. May it likewise inspire us to greater loyalty to our Church and its far-flung activities.

EMIL SWENSON

Minneapolis, Minnesota, December, 1947.



Rev. Emeroy Johnson

Preface

The President of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference of the Augustana Synod, Dr. Emil Swenson, in his annual report to the Conference in 1946, called attention to the approaching ninetieth anniversary, to be observed in 1948, and stated that plans had been made to publish a history of the early years of the Conference. The Executive Committee had taken preliminary steps toward the realization of this project, and had chosen the undersigned to write the history. The project was approved by the Conference and the Executive Committee was authorized to proceed.

The history of the Conference had been written and published on several previous occasions. At the twenty-fifth anniversary in 1883 Dr. Eric Norelius wrote a history and presented it in the form of an address. This was based mainly on his personal knowledge and recollections as an active participant in the work of the Conference throughout its history. Again at the fortieth anniversary in 1898 Dr. Norelius spoke on the same topic, and the two historical addresses were then published in booklet form. A more comprehensive history of the Conference, written by Rev. F. M. Eckman, was published at the fiftieth anniversary in 1908. In 1921 Dr. Emil Lund was elected Conference historian and devoted several years to gathering material and compiling the history of the Conference, its institutions, its congregations, and its pastors. His two-volume work, comprising more than a thousand pages, appeared in 1926.

The above-mentioned histories were all written in the Swedish language, the language of the great majority of the pioneers of the Conference. As the Conference was rapidly becoming an Americanized church group a need was felt for a Conference history in English. By decision of the Conference, a committee consisting of Dr. P. A. Mattson, Dr. J. A. Krantz, and Mr. Victor E. Lawson collaborated in the production of "The Beginnings and Progress of Minnesota Conference" and this was published in connection with the Diamond Jubilee in 1929.

In preparing for the ninetieth anniversary in 1948, which is also the Centennial Year of the Augustana Synod, the Executive Committee has decided that special emphasis should be given to the early and

formative pioneer period. Instead of publishing a complete history of the Conference down to the present time, the Committee decided to include approximately the first twenty-five years of the annals of the Conference, from 1851 to about the middle of the seventies. In this period the foundations were laid for the extensive home mission work of the Minnesota Conference, and also for Christian higher education and for the institutional charity work of the Conference.

The assignment to write this history has been a privilege and a pleasant duty. Having been reared in the Christian faith in one of the pioneer churches of the Minnesota Conference, having been graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College, and having had the further privilege of serving as pastor in several parishes in this Conference, the writer has found it a labor of love to study the early history of our Church. The work has been a pleasure also because of the splendid cooperation given by many individuals, organizations, and groups. It is impossible to make a complete list of all who have helped to make this book a reality, but acknowledgment must be given especially to the following: To the President of the Minnesota Conference, Dr. Emil Swenson, for suggesting this project, for his constant encouragement and helpful advice in many details, and most of all for his personal and friendly interest in every phase of the work; to the Executive Committee for the support granted to this project; to Gustavus Adolphus College, especially to Dr. Edgar M. Carlson, president, Dr. Joshua Larson, archivist, and Mr. Grant Hanson, librarian, for their kind assistance in making available the material in the archives pertaining to the history of the Conference, and for many personal favors; to Dr. Oscar N. Olson and Dr. I. O. Nothstein, for their cooperation in research at the Synodical archives in Rock Island, Illinois; to the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, for the privilege of using material in its library, for personal assistance given by members of the staff, and for the permission to use a number of photographs; to Miss Phyllis Booton of the faculty of the University of Minnesota for reading the manuscript and offering valuable suggestions; to the Little Falls parish for granting a five months' leave of absence in the summer of 1947; and to many individual pastors and laymen for personal encouragement and for specific help furnished in gathering material for this history.

A sincere attempt has been made to ascertain the facts regarding the early history of the Minnesota Conference. If mistakes have found their way into print, the writer will appreciate having them called to his

attention. Perhaps this volume may serve to stimulate a greater interest in the Church and a desire to know more about the beginnings of Lutheranism in this region. If this proves to be the case, the writer will feel that this project has been well worth while.

The chief purpose of all our church activity is the salvation of souls to the glory of God. It is the writer's hope that this volume may in some way serve this purpose in the days to come.

EMEROY JOHNSON

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A Church Is Planted

The Birthday of the Minnesota Conference

Autumn time had come again to Minnesota, as it had come each year through ages past. The green of the forest primeval was turning to bronze of oak and flaming red of sugar maple groves. Ten thousand lakes offered happy landings for myriads of ducks on their journey south. The ancient Father of Waters flowed majestically between wooded banks. It was Minnesota autumn in all its beauty.

But at the time of which we write, changes had come that altered the age-old scene. The forest was retreating before the attacks of lumbermen and farmers. A few bridges spanned the Mississippi; its waters had been put to work sawing lumber and grinding flour; and the boats that sailed the river had brought thousands of settlers into Minnesota. Cities had begun to grow along the banks of the river: St. Paul, St. Anthony, Red Wing, Hastings, Anoka, St. Cloud, to name but a few. Settlers had followed the tributaries and built homes in the Minnesota and St. Croix Valleys. Hundreds of colonies were found throughout the southern half of the state, and a scattering few in the northern section. A network of roads had come into existence, but they were still in primitive condition. There was not yet a rod of railroad track in Minnesota.

It was October, 1858. Minnesota as a state was less than six months old, an infant among the thirty-two states comprising the union. Its nine-year territorial history had been an exciting period. These years had witnessed the coming of 150,000 new settlers. In three years, 1854-1857, it is said that 700 new towns were platted in Minnesota. Speculators were frantically buying land, advertising non-existent towns, booming the prices of their lots, selling to optimistic buyers who counted on reselling at a profit the next day. The inflationary spiral soon reached its limit. In August 1857 the boom suddenly changed to a "bust." A financial panic that began with the collapse of business concerns and banks in the east spread quickly to the pioneer communities of the west. Most of the speculators and the floating population left Minnesota. Immigration slowed down to a trickle. Ambitious projects came to an abrupt stop. Buildings were left half finished. Money be

came scarce as eastern capitalists called in their loans. Pioneer farmers could raise their own food and be quite self-sufficient, unless they had overreached themselves in buying land and machinery on credit. They found it almost impossible to sell any products for cash. Work for the city laborer was scarce and wages were low. Fear held the economic system in its grip for several years.

On that autumn day—Monday, October 4, 1858,—two men from a pioneer community in Goodhue county directed their steps to the levee at Red Wing, there to await the arrival of a Mississippi River steamboat to take them some distance up the river. It was evident from their manner of dress that they expected no luxurious mode of travel. One would hardly have guessed from their appearance that they were two clergymen, but such they were, two young Swedish Lutheran pastors, sharing the pioneer life with their countrymen in Minnesota.

One was a recent arrival from the old country, having come but a few weeks before. His name over there had been Johan Peter Carlson. Heeding the suggestion of a pastor in Illinois, he had added "Boren," to distinguish him from the many Carlsons found among the immigrants. He was not yet an ordained pastor, but had been granted a license to preach by the Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois. He was thirty-four years old.

His companion was Rev. Eric Norelius. He had come from Sweden in 1850 at the age of seventeen, had attended school in America, was well versed in English as well as Swedish and German, and already had had two years' experience as an ordained pastor, though he was not yet twenty-five years old. He was pastor of a congregation in Red Wing and also served a flourishing country congregation at Vasa, thirteen miles from Red Wing. Boren was his assistant.

They were now on their way to meet with brethren in the faith for the purpose of establishing in Minnesota a Lutheran Conference. This had been agreed upon at a preliminary meeting in Red Wing in July; permission for it had been given by the Synod of Northern Illinois at its meeting in Mendota, Illinois, in September; and the call for the convention had been published in *Minnesota Posten*, a Swedish paper edited and published by Norelius at Red Wing.

In spite of chilly fall weather, and in spite of hard times in Minnesota, hopes were high in the hearts of the two young pastors. While they waited for the boat they had much to talk about. The opportunities and the responsibilities that awaited the Lutheran church in the

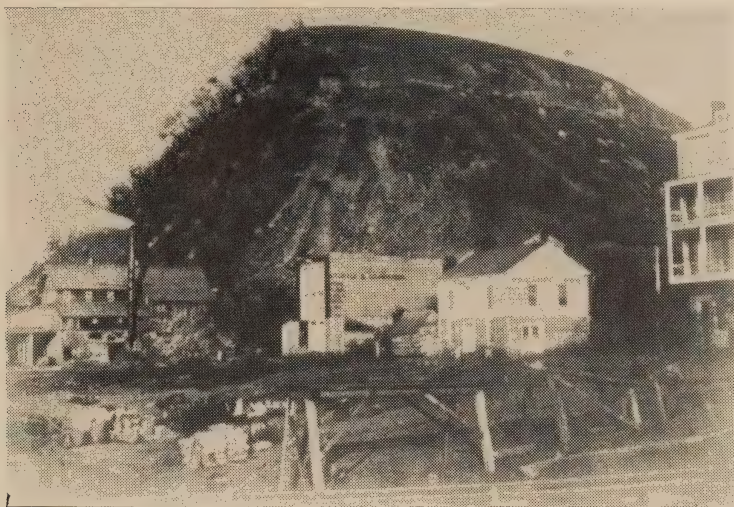


PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Red Wing in 1857 showing the old levee near Barn Bluff. This is where Norelius and Boren waited for a boat on the night of October 4, 1858.

new state naturally formed a chief topic of conversation. Already there were thousands of Lutherans. In 1850 Minnesota had only twelve Scandinavians and 147 Germans. By 1858 there were about 10,000 Scandinavians and 15,000 Germans. Swedish Lutheran congregations had been organized in a dozen places, mainly in the St. Croix valley, Goodhue County, and Nicollet County. There were five pastors serving these congregations, and scattered groups of their countrymen in various parts of the state. The pioneer community of Chisago Lake, begun in 1851, was to be host at the organization meeting of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference.

Evening came and darkness settled over the village of Red Wing, but no boat appeared. To make matters more depressing a chilly drizzle began to fall. But the two men of the cloth dared not leave the dock, for fear they might miss the boat, if it came. They managed to find a meager shelter under a corner of a tarpaulin that was spread over a stack of freight on the dock. When they had nothing more to talk about they kept themselves awake by rehearsing the conjugation of the Greek verb *typto*.

At last, about three o'clock in the morning they heard the "paddles

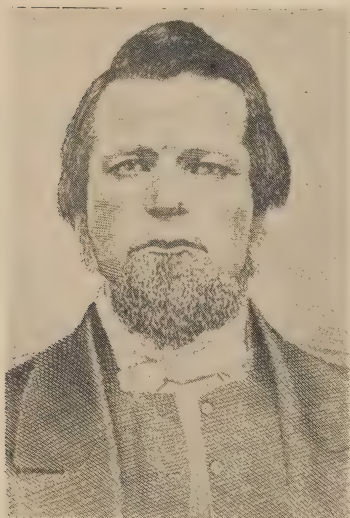
chunkin'." Going on board the boat they secured passage to Prescott, Wisconsin, some twenty miles up the river, and arrived there in the early morning hours. From Prescott they rode by stage to Hudson. Here they crossed the St. Croix and walked to Stillwater. In this busy lumber town the two travellers went to a small rooming house known familiarly as "The Swallow's Nest." It was situated half way up the hill, and was operated by a capable and friendly woman, a widow by the name of Mrs. Smith. Here they not only found lodging for the night, but they also had the privilege of gathering a little group of friends and acquaintances for a devotional service in the evening.

It was a frosty morning when the two set out afoot the next day. Leaving Stillwater behind, they made their way to the north, through the humming sawmill town of Marine Mills—already nineteen years old, the oldest sawmill town in the St. Croix Valley—and a few miles farther to the home of Johannes Peterson, known then as "Islycke" or "Yfslycke" from Peterson's old home place in Sweden. Towards evening rain began to fall and they arrived tired, wet, and footsore at the Peterson home. This place was near the present station of Copas, about three miles from the village of Scandia.

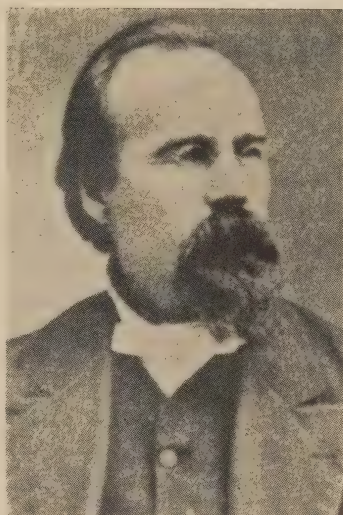
In spite of the wearisome journey, they did not go to rest until they had met together for devotions. The Bible study was led by Pastor Boren, and he kept on so long that Norelius began to think it never would come to an end. Such, at least, was the report given by Norelius twenty-five years later.

Here at "Islycke" they met others who were bound for the same place as themselves, among them being Rev. Peter Carlson from the Union settlement in Carver County. After enjoying the hospitality of the Peterson home, they all were ready on the morning of Thursday, October 7, to continue on the way to their destination. They had a ride (presumably by oxcart) from "Islycke" to the Peter Glader farm on the south shore of Chisago Lake. From there they finished their journey by means of rowboat across the lake, arriving at the church at noon. Boren and Norelius had come about eighty miles in three days, walking one-third of the distance, and travelling in five different conveyances.

Another pastor, Peter Beckman, arrived from the newly organized Spring Garden church, a few miles from Cannon Falls. There was one more Swedish Lutheran minister in the state at this time, Pehr A. Cederstam of the Scandian Grove church in Nicollet County. He had



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN



COURTESY EAST UNION LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Rev. Johan Peter Carlson Boren, First President of Minnesota Conference.
Ola Paulson, East Union Pioneer, one of the four laymen at organization of
Minnesota Conference, and the first Conference treasurer. Later
ordained to the ministry.*

been at Chisago Lake the previous Sunday, and Boren and Norelius met him in Stillwater when he was on his way home. He found it impossible to remain at Chisago Lake for the conference meeting because of other duties. However, he was the first resident Swedish Lutheran minister in Minnesota, serving as pastor of Chisago Lake Church from 1855 until the spring of 1858. Since his leaving, this church had been without the services of a resident pastor.

Chisago Lake was at this time a colony seven years old, with a population of some five hundred people, nearly all of them Swedes, and the majority of them members of the Lutheran Church. On the high, wooded peninsula between two arms of the lake, they had built their church. It was of frame construction, seventy by forty-eight feet in size. It stood on the same spot where the present Chisago Lake Church stands. The place, "beautiful in elevation," had been secured for the church, by the tact and courage of Pastor Cederstam. The building had been erected in 1856, but was not yet quite complete. The interior was

still unfinished, and the church furniture was of the most primitive kind, consisting of loose planks for pews, and a makeshift pulpit on a raised platform at the front of the church.

Laymen were present from four congregations in the state. These were Daniel Nilson from the church at Marine (the present Elim Church, Scandia); Ola Paulson from East Union, Carver County (who was accepted as a delegate though not officially elected by his congregation); Frans C. Bjorklund from Rusheby (this was only a preaching place as yet. A congregation was organized there in 1860. It did not have a long existence, for the settlers moved away. Rush City came into being later); and Håkan Swedberg, representing the Chisago Lake Church. (In early records "Paulson" is sometimes spelled "Paulsen" or "Pålson," and his first name is sometimes written "Ole").

No business was transacted the first afternoon, but the Chisago Lake people assembled together with the visitors for a joyous worship service. Pastors Carlson and Boren preached. No records were kept as to text or theme, but Norelius remarked long afterwards that there was an unusual reverence and holy stillness that pervaded the entire conference convention. They felt that great things were astir in the kingdom of God. "There was a sacred festive feeling, a spiritual earnestness that permeated our meeting" said Norelius. "At the same time we felt inspired with happiness and courage. We thought we had come a long way in our religious development when we could organize a Conference. We did not think about difficulties. Nothing seemed impossible to us."

The organization of the Conference took place on Friday, October 8, 1858. At nine o'clock the men assembled in the church and Pastor Beckman read a chapter from the Bible, and led in prayer. Pastor J. P. C. Boren was then elected president, and Pastor Eric Norelius secretary. (Later in the day, following the adoption of a constitution, Mr. Ola Paulson was elected treasurer.)

When the time had come for adoption of a constitution, Norelius was ready with a proposal for such a document, which was considered, item by item, and adopted as the fundamental law of the new conference. It was rather brief, consisting of three articles with some subdivisions, but it served as the official conference constitution during the formative period. The first article was about the name and the membership. The name adopted was: Minnesota Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois. Membership was defined as fol-



lows: "All members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois, living in Minnesota and near-by states, who are members in good standing in the said synod, shall have the right of membership in this conference and shall be considered as members of the same after having been present at a regular conference meeting and having made application therefor." At conference meetings each pastor should bring with him a lay delegate from his congregation, such delegates to have full right of a seat and the privilege of voting. Every vacant congregation was given the right to send a commissioner to the conference meeting for the purpose of reporting on the condition of the congregation.

Article Three concerned the work and purpose of the Conference. It was specified that the Conference should meet at least three times a year, and "the great purpose of the Conference meetings shall be to give an opportunity to pastors and congregations for a rich spiritual up-building. Sermons shall therefore be delivered at least once a day as long as the meeting lasts." The Conference was to promote the spiritual welfare of the congregations and for this purpose reports were to be given as to the conditions in each and every congregation; reports on mission tours and visits to vacant congregations by the pastors; the

establishment of Christian parish schools, and the support of such schools in places where there are no pastors; to assist and advise in cases of dissension in the congregations (but the contending parties may appeal to the Synod); to recommend all praiseworthy, Christian charitable undertakings and to find means and institutions which will best serve them; and to examine candidates for the office of pastor and to recommend them to the Synod for receiving ordination.

The election of officers and the adoption of the constitution did not require much time. The delegates were in perfect agreement about everything and there were no debates. They still had some time left before the noon hour, so they proceeded to the consideration of the question of supplying the vacant congregations. Attention was first given to Chisago Lake and the St. Croix Valley in general. In the afternoon this discussion was resumed and it was decided that Pastor Boren should remain in Chisago Lake until the latter part of October and serve the Swedes also at Rush Lake and other near-by points. Then, if he found he could not stay longer, Carlson, Beckman, and Boren should take turns visiting Chisago Lake once a month until spring. It was also decided to ask Pastor Cederstam to serve the Vista congregation, Waseca County, as often as possible.

Pastor Carlson and Mr. Paulson left the meeting to start on their homeward journey. The others remained over Saturday and Sunday. A business session was held on Saturday forenoon at which resolutions were adopted urging the congregations "and all our people in Minnesota" to contribute to the Scandinavian professorship at the Northern Illinois Synod's school in Springfield, Illinois. Chisago Lake had already contributed \$25.00. The Swedish Publication Society of Chicago (an institution of the Mississippi Conference) was given official endorsement as beneficial to the Swedish people. It was decided to print the minutes of the meeting in Norelius' paper, *Minnesota Posten*. (The minutes appeared in the last issue of that paper, dated October 19, 1858. They were reprinted in *Tidskrift för Svensk Evangelisk Luthersk Kyrkohistoria i N. Amerika*, 1899, and reprinted in facsimile from *Posten* in the *Minnesalbum* at the fiftieth anniversary of the Conference. They were published in an English translation in Volume XI of *Augustana Historical Society Publications*, 1946. The original manuscript book of minutes is in the office of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference, 2445 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota.)

Divine services were held every afternoon, during the Conference

*Old Chisago Lake Church,
Center City. Erected 1856.
In this Church the Minne-
sota Conference was Or-
ganized, October 8, 1858.*



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

meeting, and on Sunday two services were held and also communion. At all these services the church was filled with numerous and attentive hearers, and especially on Sunday, when an immense throng of people came. On Sunday forenoon a collection for the benefit of the Conference was received, amounting to \$5.09. Money was scarce at that time, in Chisago Lake as in other parts of Minnesota. According to an article in *Minnesota Posten*, the people at Chisago Lake had picked several hundred bushels of cranberries during the fall which they sold at \$1.75 per bushel. This was the only product they could dispose of for cash.

The number of congregations at the time of the organization was thirteen. These were: Chisago Lake; Marine (now Elim, Scandia); First, St. Paul; Vasa; Red Wing; Cannon River; St. Peter, (First Lutheran); Scandian Grove; Spring Garden; East Union and West Union, Carver County; Vista; and Stockholm, Wisconsin. The communicant

membership was not definitely known, but was estimated at about 900.

During the first ten years the Conference grew to a total of twenty-five congregations with 3,500 communicants, served by ten pastors. At the twenty-fifth anniversary in 1883 there were 53 pastors, 145 congregations, and 17,049 communicants. In 1908, at the fiftieth anniversary there were 167 pastors, 391 congregations, and 48,228 communicants. Now at the ninetieth anniversary there are fewer congregations than in 1908, because of the organization of the Red River Valley Conference in 1912 and the Canada Conference in 1913, both areas formerly having been included in the Minnesota Conference. There are now 318 congregations, 260 pastors, and 87,000 communicant members.

The little mustard seed planted ninety years ago has grown to be a mighty tree.

An Immigrant Church on American Soil

Human beings, like all other living organisms on this earth, react in some way or another to that which surrounds them and affects them. History is very largely an account of how people have reacted and how they have adapted themselves to their environment. To some extent human beings can change their environment and the record of what man has done in this respect constitutes a large part of history. To a certain extent man can choose his environment, and the attempt to better their conditions has been responsible for the migration of millions of people. The story of migrations is an important part of human history.

Human environment is a very complex thing, and since man is a very complex being, it is not easy—indeed it is impossible—to understand and describe all the forces and influences that cause human beings to act as they do.

Wherever we study the history of man, in any part of the world or in any era, we find physical factors at work. Man has to deal with the earth itself and with the forces of nature, to find a place for himself to live and a means of winning some sort of sustenance for himself. This becomes then also an economic sphere, in which he deals with other humans who are trying to find a place and a means of making a living. These factors have often led to quarrel, private conflicts, large scale war. World history has dealt very largely with these factors.

In the study of history it is not adequate to consider only the physical and the economic factors in man's environment. Man is essentially a religious being and no true history of a people can be written by those who disregard spiritual factors in the environment. Church history deals mostly with this factor, but church history to be rightly understood must be studied in the framework of the physical and economic environment. All the environmental factors are complex and hard to analyze, and the spiritual factors are the most complex. This must not deter us from attempting the study of church history. The reason why we study history is because it is a study of ourselves, that we may know how we have come to the point where we are today. If we can

learn to know how our forefathers reacted to their environment, it will help us to know what we are doing today and what we ought to do tomorrow.

In the study of some segment of church history, we meet these environmental factors in some specific way, and perhaps one particular feature in the environment offers a key to the understanding of the whole story. In studying the beginnings of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference it is absolutely necessary to note that it was established by people who had recently come here from Sweden. It was, to begin with, an immigrant church. How it has become an Americanized church is a story that belongs to a somewhat later period, although it may truly be said that the process of Americanization began immediately upon the arrival of the immigrants on the shores of America.

In the ordinary life span of any human being environmental factors are very complex. In the case of people who migrate from one country to another we have a special situation. The early environment is broken off and becomes practically only a memory. They enter a new environment which is in many respects very different from the former. It is no wonder that such a change has in multitudes of cases caused a breakdown of personality and serious mental disorder. It is a well known fact, abundantly proved by statistics, that the incidence of mental disease in the United States is higher on the foreign born than on the native born.

Most of the immigrants who came here from Sweden could take very little of their old environment with them. A few personal possessions came in the old emigrant trunk. Some found it possible to choose for their home a region resembling somewhat the old home surroundings, with woods and hills, and a lake or a brook to remind them of the old home. But methods of living were different. Farming and marketing presented new problems. Social and political life were far different from the conditions they had known in the old country. Forms of church life were different. No state church was found in America and none could be established.

For those who have not been through the experience of emigration it is altogether impossible to imagine the tumult of soul and mind that it involved. Adapting to an environment almost completely new was both a dangerous, critical experience and a tremendously inspiring experience. The break from one environment to another may have been quite easy for some of the younger people, but for mature, married

people with families it was indeed coming to a new world. Emigration has been studied from almost every conceivable angle, but there yet remains something to be said on the subject, particularly as to its effects on the personalities and characters of the people directly involved.

Though it was impossible for the emigrants to transport their old environment to America or to reconstruct it here to any great degree, there was one important factor which many brought along and which had a powerful influence on them here. This factor was the Word of God and their faith in that Word. This was something far above the mere forms of church organization. Their faith in the Word and in the Christ who is revealed in that Word was a powerful unifying, strengthening, and stabilizing force in the midst of the unsettling factors that made adaptation to new environments difficult. They had been taught to believe that the Holy Spirit calls and gathers believers into a Church which is preserved in union with Jesus Christ, whether they lived in Europe or in America. Here in this country they had the opportunity to see and to be participants in this gathering and unifying activity of the Spirit of God. The history of an immigrant church therefore must be studied within the framework of the physical and economic situation in which the immigrants found themselves here, keeping always in mind that the spiritual factor is something that they could and often did bring along with them from the old country.

A certain writer (Charles A. Musselman) has said that it is of little or no importance to know "How many steps to the corner?" but the principles which established the corner are important. "Corners are man-made" says Mr. Musselman; "principles which established them are eternal. There was a time when all of nature was streamlined—naturally streamlined. Boundaries were marked by mountain ranges and rivers. The land stretched out in great oceans of plains and valleys. There were no corners, neither by section nor by lot. Then man began to dream of estates, of herds and of harvests. That called for the establishment of boundary lines and the declaration of ownership. That is when we created the corner. These corners were established by trial and effort, by sweat and sacrifice, even by bloodshed. The important thing is neither that there is a corner nor the distance to it. If I can walk it matters little whether it is seven steps or seventeen. The highly important thing is that I can walk and that I can see as I walk, and that I can reason as I see, and that I know when I have reached the corner. Life and intellect and the judgment between right and wrong are

among the supreme values. The intricate complexities of every day life often cause us to confuse the sublime with the trivialities. Or rather, we become so absorbed with measuring and evaluating that we lose sight of those values which are both timeless and immeasurable."

In writing the history of the Christian Church or of some little segment of the Church, it is necessary for the sake of clearness, to trace the steps by which it has come to the point where it is today. Physical environment and economic forces have had an important influence in making your church and my church what it is now. But church history deals very definitely with factors in the environment which are neither physical nor economic but spiritual. When we look at the corner stone of our church building, the important thing is not how many steps we must take to reach it and to read its inscription. The fact that it is made of granite or marble or whether it has a bronze plate is of minor importance. Even the date on the stone is of no great importance. The important thing is not that a corner was established by man at that particular spot, but why was it established? There we deal with the spiritual factor, man's response to an environment that touches the soul, a Word that speaks of a cornerstone which has been laid, a foundation which shall stand to eternity. The important thing in church history is to see how man has adapted himself to the environment in which Christ is the center. Faith in Him has led to the establishment of congregations and the erection of houses of worship. Consecration to Him has led to the taking up of His way of life, according to His challenge, *Whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.* (Luke 9.24); *Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* (Matthew 6.33). Though there is not one who has fully measured up to such a challenge, it cannot be denied that in writing church history one is dealing with men and women who have had those words as part of their environment and have believed that such words are true and carry divine authority. Though not all their actions have been governed by these sayings of Christ, some of their actions have been at least to some extent directed and controlled thereby, and therefore the cornerstones of church sanctuaries, church colleges, and the church's charitable institutions and foreign mission stations have been established on the principle that Christ is the Cornerstone of life itself.

We shall try to see the origin and development of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference in the light of the principles which we have here stated. The organization of this church body was not an isolated, sporadic curiosity. It was a part of a much greater event, and we shall try to see it in the framework of this greater event. We shall attempt to trace the steps that brought about the establishment of this conference, and its further development, covering altogether about twenty-five years, from the beginning of the 1850's down to the late 'seventies. Sometimes it may seem that we are picturing the framework only, but it should be kept in mind that we are not emphasizing the matter of "How many steps to the corner?" but rather, "Why was this corner established, and on what principles?"

The organization of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference was closely related to two great movements which were going on in this country: Immigration into the new states; and the growth and extension of the church. These two movements have generally been combined in the history of American development. When the immigrants have come and established new settlements on the frontier they have taken the steps necessary for the establishment of the church in their new homeland. Or the church has sought them and gathered them into its fold.

In most cases the church has found its resources too limited and its efforts have been inadequate. There is no simple and acceptable yardstick by which to measure a church's accomplishments. The church itself is most ready to admit that it has not fully measured up to its opportunities. But on the other hand, no one can deny that the spiritual forces working in the church have been an important factor in the lives of many individuals and in the life of our country as a whole.

The United States, as a constitutional republic, was less than seventy years old in 1858. In those seventy years it had grown from a population of three million to thirty million. The original thirteen states had increased in number to thirty-two, the newest one being Minnesota, admitted to the Union on May 11, 1858. As already stated, Minnesota had grown very rapidly in population during its territorial period, 1849 to 1858. Though there was much prejudice against Minnesota in some places, on account of its supposedly arctic climate, thousands of people were brave enough to take the risk. Minnesota editors were not slow in sending out favorable publicity, extolling the climate as "salubrious" and "invigorating." Good soil, favorable for a varied agriculture, attracted home seekers. The logging industry offered opportunities for

employment. The growing cities needed merchants, professional men, and laborers.

Transportation was a problem. Roads were few and in poor condition. The Mississippi River was the main trade route connecting Minnesota with the older settlements to the south and east. But it was frozen over about four or five months of the year. In spite of these difficulties people came, bringing household goods and intending to stay. At first the settlements were all in the triangle formed by the Mississippi and the St. Croix rivers. This area had been given up by the Indians in 1837. West of the Mississippi the Sioux Indians possessed the land until they were persuaded to sign the treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota in 1851, by which they ceded practically half of Minnesota from the Iowa border north to St. Cloud and Alexandria which now constitutes one of the finest farming regions in the world. Land hungry settlers poured into the new territory, the frontier moved westward rapidly, as towns and villages were established and roads were laid out. They came from the eastern states. They came from Europe. They came. They saw. They settled.

Immigration from the Scandinavian countries had been only a

1 1 1

The Place for Scandinavians

But this Minnesota is a glorious country, and just the country for Northern emigrants — just the country for a new Scandinavia. It is four times as large as England; its soil is of the richest description, with extensive wooded tracts; great numbers of rivers and lakes abounding in fish, and a healthy, invigorating climate.

...

What a glorious new Scandinavia might not Minnesota become! Here would the Swede find again his clear, romantic lakes, the plains of Scania rich in corn, and the valleys of Norrland. . . .

But seriously, Scandinavians who are well off in the Old Country ought not to leave it. But such as are too contracted at home, and who desire to emigrate, should come to Minnesota. The climate, the situation, the character of the scenery agrees with our people better than any other of the American states, and none of them appear to me to have a greater or a more beautiful future before them than Minnesota.

—Fredrika Bremer, *The Homes of the New World*, 11, 56, 57, (October 25, 1850).

trickle down to about 1845. Then it began to increase, and it so happened that just at the time when Minnesota was being opened up with great opportunities for farming and other means of livelihood, the Scandinavian immigration became a stream. In 1850 there were only 3,559 persons in the United States who had been born in Sweden. During the 'fifties more than 15,000 arrived in this country from Sweden. Between 1860 and 1870 America received 80,000 Swedes, and the stream continued to grow ever larger until after 1900.

There were several reasons why many of the Swedish immigrants settled in Minnesota and other northwestern states. One important factor in the situation is stated in this quotation: "States like Minnesota and Wisconsin, railroads which had secured grants of vast areas of land on which they were naturally anxious to place bona fide settlers, colonization companies all began intensive campaigns in Sweden to induce her people to emigrate and settle in the particular state of the respective agents. These agents were active in practically every part of rural Sweden addressing public meetings or speaking to smaller gatherings in homes; distributing literature giving most alluring pictures of the life that awaited the able and ambitious in the New World; and providing guides for almost any kind of group that set sail for the United States" (Yearbook of American Institute of Swedish Arts, Literature, and Science, 1945).

The story of immigration agents, sponsored and paid by the state or by the railroads, or by both cooperatively, is too long to be told here. It was an important factor in the settlement of certain regions, but chiefly in a later period. In the 'fifties there were no railroads in Minnesota, and the territory did not carry on any extensive or continuous campaign for immigrants. Perhaps the chief factor was the possibility of getting land for practically nothing, and as to Swedish immigration in those early days, it must be said that many came to Minnesota because the land and the scenery reminded them of their old homeland. The first pioneers wrote to their relatives back home or to friends in eastern states, urging them to come. These "America letters" had a powerful influence on great numbers of people in the old country. Here was land. Here was freedom. Here was equality. The farmer, yes, even the hired man, could talk to the banker as man to man. Here was religious tolerance, and no state church. Here were pastors who sought the sheep and ministered to their needs as true shepherds. In Sweden at that time the Church forbade lay preaching, and frowned on infor-

mal religious gatherings in the homes, even when there was no attempt or suggestion of separating from the state church. Ministers preached sermons against emigration and painted sorrowful pictures of life in America which soon were found to be untrue.

The deplorable religious conditions, combined with the economic hardships and the overbearing attitude of the upper classes of society, all this combined to put it into the hearts of thousands of the poorer, but able, hard working, and conscientious people to go to America.

To Minnesota many of them came, and from and after the year 1854 they were never wholly without pastoral leadership. Three congregations were organized in 1854, two in 1855. Eric Norelius served as preacher and teacher during the summer of 1854, and from then on his life was dedicated to the work in Minnesota, though he was away from here at times for short periods.

The growth and development of the pioneer colonies is indicated in these words by Dr. George M. Stephenson:

"On his second visit to the St. Croix Valley, in 1855, Eric Norelius estimated that there were about two thousand Swedes in Minnesota, of whom thirty lived at Stillwater, three hundred at Marine, and five hundred at Chisago Lake—the latter being the largest Swedish settlement in the territory. After his third visit, in 1857, Norelius wrote that he had found many changes. Practically all government land at Chisago Lake and Marine had been taken, but good land could still be purchased for ten dollars an acre. He estimated the number of Swedes in the St. Croix Valley at fifteen hundred, one thousand of whom were at Chisago Lake and three hundred at Marine" (George M. Stephenson in *Minnesota History*, Volume 17, P. 398). Dr. Stephenson explains further in the same article the type of colonies where the first Swedes settled in Minnesota: "It appears that before 1860 there were three types of Swedish settlements in Minnesota, in the St. Croix Valley, where the pioneers chose timbered land; in Nicollet County where the log cabins were raised on the prairie; and in Goodhue County, which furnished a combination of wooded land prairie." (P. 399).

It will be our purpose to trace in greater detail in succeeding chapters the growth and development of these and other settlements. Although the stream of Swedish immigration to these areas ceased about fifty years ago, they still maintain their racial and religious characteristics to a very large extent, and they constitute some of the main strongholds of Lutheranism in Minnesota today.



COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

River steamers at the levee in St. Paul, about 1858. From left to right: Grey Eagle, Frank Steele, Jeannette Roberts, and Time and Tide. These boats brought thousands of settlers into Minnesota.

The Lutheran Church had a history of more than two centuries in America when the Swedish Lutheran pioneers came to Minnesota. The Lutheran Church in America had its beginnings in colonial times. Swedes began to settle in Delaware in 1638 and established the Lutheran church there. For many years it retained its Lutheran name and character. A number of church buildings were erected, some of which still remain, including the famous Old Swedes Church at Wilmington, Delaware, and Gloria Dei Church in Philadelphia. However, because of the fact that the Delaware Swedes failed to train ministers for their congregations and Sweden neglected to send enough of them, the early Swedish Lutheran churches gradually were taken over by the Episcopal church.

The German Lutherans settled in Pennsylvania and New York in early colonial times, and established churches here and there. Beginning with the arrival of the "patriarch" Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg in 1742, solid foundations were laid for Lutheranism in America.

His motto was: *Ecclesia Plantanda*, The church must be planted. In 1748, under his leadership, the first Lutheran synod in the United States was organized, which is still in existence and is known as the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, now constituting a part of the United Lutheran Church of America.

In the next hundred years a large number of synods were organized, as Lutheran immigrants poured into this country and Lutheranism spread into new areas, west of the Alleghenies, in the Ohio Valley, and in the upper Mississippi Valley. These many synods were not all agreed in their interpretation of the Lutheran doctrine. The story of disagreements, divisions and subdivisions, new organizations and new combinations, is long, involved, and at times tragic. Clash of personalities sometimes caused factionalism. A liberal form of theology, known as "New Lutheranism" flourished for a time, and threatened to change the whole fabric of the Lutheran Church, but gradually there was a return to conservative Lutheranism on the basis of the Augsburg Confession.

It was while this controversy was still raging, in 1850 that Swedish Lutheranism began to get a foothold in Illinois. Rev. L. P. Esbjörn, the first Swedish Lutheran minister to come to America since the loss of the Delaware churches, arrived in this country in 1849 and settled at Andover, Illinois. In 1851, when the Synod of Northern Illinois was organized, he became a member of it. The other early Swedish pastors also joined this synod, including T. N. Hasselquist (1852). Erland Carlsson (1853), Jonas Swensson and O. C. T. Andren (1856). P. A. Cederstam was ordained by this Synod in 1855, A. Andreen the same year, and Eric Norelius 1856. But some of them did not feel quite satisfied, and insisted on reservations with regard to some of the doctrinal viewpoints. Norelius had studied at the Joint Synod of Ohio's school, Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, and felt quite strongly attached to that group. When the time came for his ordination, he hesitated for a time as to what synod he should join. His choice was the Northern Illinois Synod, not because he liked it better, but because that was where the other Swedish Lutheran pastors belonged.

The immigrants who established the first Swedish Lutheran colony in Minnesota had stayed for a short time in Illinois and had become acquainted with Esbjörn and some of the Lutheran Church members in Andover and Moline, Illinois. Contacts were kept up with Esbjörn and others in Illinois through correspondence, and it was natural that

the Minnesota pioneers, when they felt the need of pastoral care and guidance, should turn to their friends in Illinois.

It was a pastor from Chicago who organized the first three Swedish Lutheran Churches in Minnesota. And practically all the early pastors had spent some time among the Swedes in Illinois before coming to Minnesota.

In this story of the origin, growth, and development of the Swedish Lutheran pioneer settlements in Minnesota, we can see not only the natural process of immigration from one country to another, and the building up of a new organization, but from the Christian point of view we can see the progress of the kingdom of God, how the Holy Spirit calls and gathers the Church out of the scattered groups of settlers, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ. It is the story of how the immigrants reacted to their environment, not only the new environment of America, free land, better economic opportunities, political freedom, etc., but also and especially how they responded to the religious environment. Here, of their own initiative, with no other compulsion than the inner force of Christian faith and love they founded churches and built their little part of the kingdom of God.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

*Chisago Lake Church, Center City, Where the Ninetieth Anniversary
Convention of the Minnesota Conference Will Be Held, 1948.*

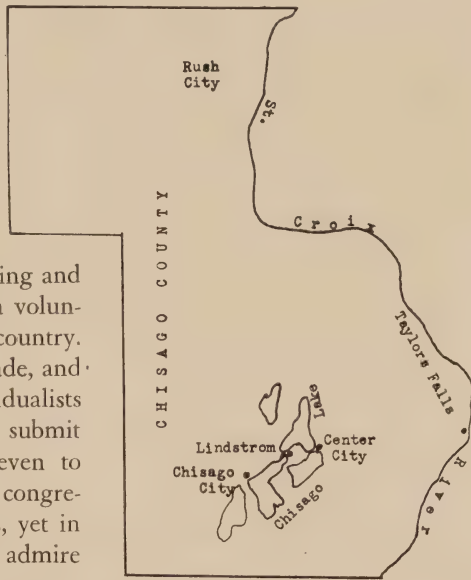
CHAPTER 3.

Chisago Lake

The United States had thirteen original colonies. The Minnesota Conference had thirteen original congregations, established prior to the organization of the Conference in October, 1858. These congregations are all still in existence and have a total membership of 7,290 communicants and 2,292 children at present.

In this and the next few chapters we shall attempt to trace in some detail the beginnings of the pioneer settlements and how the church was planted. The individualism of the pioneers is beautifully and nobly exemplified in the organizing and support of the church as a voluntary association in a free country. Though mistakes were made, and though there were individualists who found it very hard to submit to church discipline, or even to observe rules of order at congregational business meetings, yet in general one finds much to admire in the story of an immigrant people hopefully planting the church in the land of their adoption.

We shall give our attention first to the origin of the Chisago Lake Church. Although the First Lutheran Church of St. Paul has the distinction of being the oldest in the Conference (and the oldest Lutheran congregation in the state) the Chisago Lake Church of Center City had its beginnings as an informal laymen's activity about three years before the establishment of the church in St. Paul. As an organized congregation, First Church, St. Paul, is six days older than Chisago Lake.



In the fall of 1850 a group of about one hundred immigrants arrived in New York, after a long voyage on a sailing vessel, from northern Sweden. They were farmers and laborers, most of them rather poor as regards earthly possessions. One man among them, Peter (or Per) Anderson, had money enough for his journey and to help some of the others also. It was their intention to stay together as a group and form a Lutheran colony somewhere in America. They hoped to have a Lutheran pastor from their old homeland to come and be their shepherd when they had found a place to settle.

Probably by virtue of his financial standing, but certainly also because of his personal qualities, his Christian character and his concern for the church and for the welfare of his fellowmen, Per Anderson was looked upon as the leader of the group. There was also a young man destined to become well known in Lutheran Church activities in America, particularly in Minnesota. This was the seventeen-year-old student, Eric Norelius. He was coming to America with the hope of completing his education for entrance into the ministry.

When the tired but hopeful immigrants landed in New York, their thoughts of staying together were shattered. A few of them remained in New York, and, as the main group moved on westward to Illinois, others dropped out here and there along the way. About half of them reached Andover, a pioneer Swedish community in western Illinois, where a Lutheran congregation had been established under the leadership of Rev. Lars P. Esbjörn in March, 1850. Now they scattered to various places around the community to find work and earn a living. It seemed that all prospects of a distinct Lutheran colony had been frustrated. Per Anderson was almost the only one who still cherished the hope.

Early in the year 1851 he happened to obtain the address of Ulrik Nordberg, a Swedish immigrant sojourning at Taylors Falls, Minnesota Territory. Not being satisfied in Illinois, he had gone to investigate newer regions. Per Anderson wrote to him, inquiring about prospects in Minnesota. Nordberg reported having found a place suitable for a new settlement, and sent a sketch map showing how to reach the Chisago Lake region. The description given by Nordberg convinced Per Anderson that it was just the place for him. He decided to move to Minnesota as soon as the ice melted. The only means of transportation was by steamboat up the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers to Stillwater. From there they had to go on a flatboat to Taylors Falls, pushing the

boat with poles. Nordberg met them in Taylors Falls and helped them make a trail through the forest to Chisago Lake, a distance of nine miles.

Per Anderson and his family, together with two other families, P. Berg's and P. Wicklund's, and also one unmarried young man, Daniel Rättig, Anderson's hired man, left Moline, Illinois, on a river steamer in the spring of 1851, and arrived at Taylors Falls on April 23. Taylors Falls was then a little village of two or three stores and a few small houses. It had a post office, the first one in Chisago county, and it was the county seat for a number of years.

On the way up the river another family, the Anders Swenson's, had joined them in the search for a place to settle. This family had made the entire journey from Sweden to Taylors Falls by boat, coming by way of New Orleans.

With some difficulty the men made their way through the trackless forest and found the beautiful lake which Nordberg had described. The women and children stayed in Taylors Falls about ten days until a trail was opened so the families, with the baggage, could be brought to Chisago Lake. As yet the land was unsurveyed, and the new settlers were merely squatters on government property. This was a common practice at the time all along the frontier, as settlers were coming in great numbers and entering virgin territory.

The Anderson family built their log cabin home about half a mile

* * *

The Gift of Music

"Although 85 per cent of the immigrants have entered the United States through the port of New York, many have also entered via New Orleans, especially those destined for the Mississippi Valley. Anders Swenson with his wife and three children from Gothenburg took this route. One child died of the cholera while coming up the river and to add to their misfortune, they were robbed of their money and consequently put off the boat at St. Louis. As good fortune would have it, Jenny Lind, the famous Swedish singer, was scheduled to give a concert there that evening and summoning all his courage, Swenson told his story to her and received a purse of \$50 with which to continue his journey to Minnesota."

Robert Grönberg, quoted in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America* 1929, P. 102,

east of where the Chisago Lake Church now stands, approximately at the northeast corner of the present church cemetery. South Chisago Lake extended up almost to that point in those days. The Berg family settled near by on land now included in the parsonage property. The Swenson's took over the claim of Nordberg, which was the long, narrow ridge of land which later became the site of the village of Center City. (Nordberg did not stay long in the community.) The Wicklund family soon moved to the vicinity of Taylors Falls.

Other settlers arrived during the summer, and on September 7, 1851, Per Anderson stated, in a letter to Eric Norelius, "There are ten who have begun farming here this summer, nine Swedes and one American. There are only three of us with families, namely, P. Wicklund, P. Berg, and I. The others are single men; but I hope there will soon be a considerable increase in the number of settlers here, for there is room for several parishes, and the climate is pleasant and healthful. It is, to be sure, somewhat difficult the first year out in the wilderness to get everything in order. We have ten miles to the nearest neighbors, and they are new settlers with farms three or four years old; but they are now in good condition. Food is more expensive here than in Illinois. A barrel of flour costs \$5.00 or \$6.00 here; pork is 10 to 12 cents per pound, etc. Laborers receive \$20 or \$25 to \$30 per month, about the same all the year around. We expect to be able to farm here successfully, if we continue in good health and all goes well."

Indians were frequent visitors the first years, and were friendly and helpful. One early settler wrote in 1855 (His letter was published in *Hemlandet* May 4, 1855): "If the Indians had not been here my family and I would hardly have been able to live through the first winter. Once every week two Indians came and gave us venison without the least remuneration. Evidently they saw that we lacked the necessities of life."

Another ten or twelve families arrived at Chisago Lake in 1852, and more than that number in 1853. They generally chose land along the wooded bays and inlets of Chisago Lake. These early settlers were not thinking of the days that would come when lakeshore farms could be subdivided and sold for summer cottages. The lake probably appealed because of scenic beauty, but also for practical reasons. It furnished their water supply before wells were dug. Fishing was good, and provided an important addition to the diet. With the oncoming wave of immigration, the land farther from the lakes was soon occupied, and

within five or six years nearly all government land in the region was taken up. In 1856 the population was estimated to be about 500.

Farming was the chief, and almost the only occupation of those early pioneers. It was farming under difficulties. Most of the work was done by hand. Only Per Anderson had a horse, and this precious beast of burden was found dead one day in the woods. Trees and brush had to be cut down and burned. Potatoes, rutabagas, oats, and wheat were planted between the stumps the first year or two. The spring of 1852 was a rainy season, making land clearing a slow and difficult process. During the first years the community was barely able to produce the food needed for the ever increasing population. On August 7, 1853 Anderson wrote to Norelius, who was then in New York, expressing his fear that they might not be able to take care of a large group of immigrants over the winter, as many new settlers had arrived during the spring and summer. There was not much room in their houses, and food was none too plentiful. The pioneer fields were small. Even with an abundance of fish and game, there was scarcely enough food for all.

Some of the men earned a few extra dollars in winter by working in the logging camps. Per Anderson, in a letter to Norelius in February 1853, tells of his experience at Rice River camp, sixty miles northwest of Chisago Lake. In the same letter Anderson writes about the manner of obtaining land at Chisago Lake: "You asked what sort of security we have as to the land where we have settled. To this I may reply that we have not yet taken legal pre-emption to our land, as there has been no difficulty with any Americans trying to force us out; we intend to delay as long as possible, in order to extend the time of payment, and since the place is situated some distance away from the city and from the road, there is an area extending several miles in all directions that has not yet been taken. . . . We know we have no right to take more than 160 acres each."

During these first busy years of pioneering, clearing land, building, caring for new settlers, working in the logging camps in winter, Per Anderson did not forget the one thing needful. He was a man of religious earnestness and conviction. His hope and his intention from the beginning had been to establish a Lutheran congregation in their new homeland. The group of 100 immigrants of which he was considered the leader, issued a call to Pastor Gustaf Palmquist, before they sailed from Sweden, asking him to come to America to be their shepherd. He came to this country about a year later, but before he came he had for-

saken the Lutheran faith and had become a Baptist. He was on his way to Chisago Lake in 1852, and came as far as to Stillwater, but there was no boat going up the river to Taylors Falls, and to walk thirty miles across country was too much of a venture for him. Furthermore he had heard that his countrymen had become scattered into many groups and were unable to form a congregation that could support a pastor.

The first pastor to visit Chisago Lake was the Rev. Gustaf Unonius, an Episcopal clergyman from Chicago. Having come to America as a young man in 1841, with a group of "better class" Swedes who settled at Pine Lake, near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he became acquainted with Episcopal missionaries and attended their school. Ordained to the ministry he served in Wisconsin for a few years, and in 1849 moved to Chicago. He claimed to be the only true representative in America of the Lutheran state church of Sweden, and tried to win immigrants to his way of thinking. Unonius undoubtedly was a capable man and sincere in his religious views, but he failed to realize that state church-ism was repugnant to most of the immigrants. On September 17, 1852 he visited Chisago Lake, preached to the people there and held a communion service. Per Anderson wrote the same day to Norelius: "It was truly a festive day, but one thing was lacking, namely, the mystery of the gospel which surpasses all human understanding. He preached the Word of God tolerably well and defended the sacraments according to our confession, in all respects just like in the Swedish state church."

Rev. Unonius warned the people to have nothing to do with Baptists and other sects, and he told them that they should seek the services of ordained ministers of the Episcopal Church if they needed any pastoral services, such as baptism. No layman should think of performing this act. This admonition failed to convince Anderson, for a few weeks later he himself baptized his daughter Christina, the first white child born at Chisago Lake. To him the Word of Christ was above the episcopacy.

This was Unonius' only visit to Chisago Lake, and it brought no definite results religiously. At least one man seemed quite enthusiastic about Unonius and would gladly have called him as pastor. A. M. Dahlhjelm, who had come to Chisago Lake in 1851, and who sometimes led the services in the early years there, seems to have been very well pleased with Rev. Unonius. On November 8, 1852, he wrote a letter to Unonius (the letter was published in *Allsvensk Samling*, April 1947), in which he says:

"Permit me to thank you most respectfully, Pastor, for the brief but very pleasant moments I enjoyed at our last meeting; would to God that the distance between us were not so great! But that we could at least meet every Sunday, and such a minister as you, Pastor, is greatly needed here. . . ."

"The most important concern for us here is that our prayers to God might be answered, that you, Pastor, would become pastor of our congregation. . . ."

Dahlhjelm mentions in his letter that "Petter Anderson does not want to hear any other sermons than Luther's old works." From this we can gather that the religious situation at this time depended mostly on whether Dahlhjelm's or Anderson's views would prevail. Perhaps if Anderson had been as eager as Dahlhjelm to listen to Unonius and to seek his help, the other colonists might have followed along. But Anderson was a Lutheran pietist of the *läsare* type, and he knew what he wanted. The Episcopal Church gained no foothold in Chisago Lake. However, there is evidence of the fact that Unonius advised many immigrants to go to Chisago Lake and thus helped to build up the community rapidly in the next few years.

During the summer of 1851 the settlers gathered for worship outdoors without benefit of clergy. Undoubtedly Anderson was the one who led these first simple devotional services. On Advent Sunday, that year, his new house was ready and a service was held indoors for the first time. Christmas Day, which had always been a festive holiday in Sweden, was celebrated in all simplicity in Anderson's log cabin home. We may be sure that in these humble surroundings the pioneers were gripped by the story of the Babe of Bethlehem, whose first home was a stable.

Thus, under consecrated lay leadership, without formal organization, these people met for worship more or less regularly from the summer of 1851 until the time when an ordained pastor was secured, several years later. Per Anderson may well be called "Minnesota's first Lutheran layman." Without a man of his character, firmness in faith, and earnest convictions, the story of Lutheranism in the state of Minnesota might have been quite different from what it has been.

Though Anderson and Dahlhjelm did not always agree, we find that both took turns at conducting the worship services. In a letter dated February 4, 1854 Dahlhjelm wrote to Rev. Erland Carlsson in Chicago: "I have now proclaimed God's unadulterated Word to this

little congregation every Sunday and holiday for a year and a half." He also reported that he had baptized five children and conducted three funerals. He stated that he had warned and admonished the people not to be led astray by false doctrine.

The Chisago Lake Lutheran congregation was organized on May 12, 1854. The pastor who led the organization meeting was the Rev. Erland Carlsson of Chicago. Although he did not become the pastor of the congregation, and stayed in the settlement only a few days, it is of interest to know what kind of man he was, for it gives us insight into the character of the people who laid the foundations of the Minnesota Conference and reveals clearly some of the underlying causes of emigration from Sweden at that time.

The first settlers at Chisago Lake were from northern Sweden, but later the great majority of them were from the southern provinces, principally Småland. It was in this province that Erland Carlsson was born, in 1822. Though he had practically no education in childhood, he learned to read and write. Brought up in a God-fearing home, and experiencing in his confirmation a deepfelt knowledge of Christ, he yearned to enter the ministry. He asked some of the pastors for guidance as to how he might obtain an education, but they discouraged him. At last he found one who tutored him privately and prepared him thoroughly for entrance to the theological course at Lund University. There he studied hard, chose the most difficult courses, and completed the work with honors. During the years of his preparation he had come into contact with some of the fervent and powerful preachers of that day. For some years Sweden had been in the midst of a stirring religious awakening, and in this movement Carlsson found the opportunity that he longed for. Even before his ordination he was often called on to preach, and to speak at informal religious gatherings, where he had the joy of seeing many souls led to faith and life in Christ. Ordained in 1849, he set to work in earnest to preach the Word in season and out of season, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort. The common people heard him gladly, but it was not long until some of the leading men began to place obstacles in his path. Although he had a permanent call, the bishop sent him out to preach at various distant points in the diocese. Transferred to another parish, he nevertheless continued his activities, not only preaching at morning worship, but inviting the people to attend informal Bible study services in the after-

noon, and having private conferences with many who sought his guidance and aid.

When he began to take an active part in the temperance movement, the opposition from the clergy and others became even more pronounced. Many pastors took part openly in drinking and card parties with the people of their parish, and there were instances when pastors appeared in their pulpits under the influence of liquor.

Carlsson was known as an evangelical and able pastor and was popular in the best sense of that word. But under a state church system in which it was common for the clergy and even the bishops and other church leaders to flout the rules of decency and to hinder the work of those who were morally upright, it was to be expected that many people would think of emigrating. Antagonism against true religious piety and fervor, combined with the intolerable attitude of the social aristocrats drove thousands of the poorer, but hard-working and capable people to seek a land where they would have better economic opportunities and also better religious environment. Letters were coming from friends and relatives in America, telling of free land, freedom of religion, and freedom from social class distinction.

Just at this time there was a Lutheran congregation in Chicago, composed of newly arrived immigrants from Sweden. They needed a pastor. Rev. T. N. Hasselquist in Galesburg helped them to send a call to Sweden. The call had a blank where the name of the pastor was to be inserted. The call was sent to Dr. Peter Fjellstedt, head of a mission institute in Lund, and a fervent evangelical preacher, with a request that he select a man to whom the call might be issued. Erland Carlsson was his choice, and in this he was convinced that God had guided him.

Rev. Carlsson accepted the call and arrived in Chicago in August 1853. With him on the journey to America were 176 of his countrymen, some of whom had learned to know him through his ministry. However, he had not advised anyone to go. Emigration agents from America had persuaded them. Many of these immigrants had heard of Chisago Lake and went there to settle. It was but natural that there would be correspondence between them and Rev. Carlsson. He was invited and urged to come to Chisago Lake as soon as possible to lead the people in the organizing of a Lutheran congregation. Though his time was more than fully occupied with the multitude of duties in

Chicago, Rev. Carlsson intended to visit his friends and countrymen in Minnesota, but before he found time for such a journey the Mississippi froze over and navigation was closed for the season.

During the winter other urgent pleas came from Minnesota. Daniel Peterson wrote a letter from Chisago Lake on January 27, 1854, describing the conditions and expressing earnest longing for a Lutheran pastor: "We have what we need for the temporal life, but for the spiritual life we need help," said Peterson. "We are longing for Pastor Erland Carlsson's arrival in the spring. I hope you will come pastor; we will pay the travelling expenses. I hope you will come and stay with me while you are caring for us here in the settlement."

Another urgent plea came from Minnesota a short time later, this time from the shepherdless Lutherans in St. Paul. The letter, pleading for pastoral care, was sent to Rev. Hasselquist in Galesburg, but since he knew that Rev. Carlsson was planning a trip to Minnesota, Hasselquist decided to wait and go some other time.

Shortly after navigation opened in the spring of 1854 we find Erland Carlsson on his way to Minnesota to visit the Lutherans in Chisago Lake and St. Paul. Arriving in St. Paul the first week in May he gathered his countrymen for worship, and on May 6, led them in organizing the First Scandinavian Lutheran congregation of St. Paul. Then he proceeded, (presumably by stage via Stillwater and Taylors Falls) on to the Chisago Lake settlement, and there, on Friday, May 12, 1854, he organized the Chisago Lake Lutheran Church.

The exact number of charter members is not known. The original list has not been preserved. P. A. Cederstam stated in a letter published in *Hemlandet* April 1, 1856, that there were "about one hundred communicants." Another source says "Of the 200 people in the community, all except two families joined." Still another source says there were fifty-seven charter members. The original church book, still in the possession of the congregation, was not begun until in 1855, when P. A. Cederstam became pastor there. According to this book there were fifty-one communicants and twenty-three children who became members of the congregation on May 12, 1854. This, however, cannot be considered accurate, for not even the name of Per Anderson is thus recorded, though we know from the original minutes that he was one of the first deacons of the church. Probably 100 is nearest the correct figure.

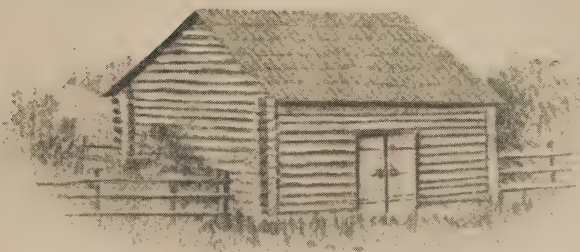
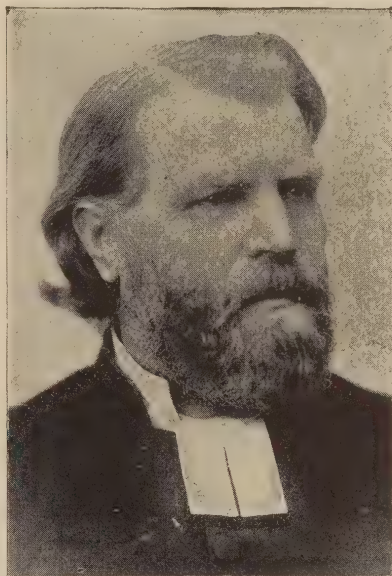


PHOTO COURTESY CHISAGO LAKE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Berg's Loge (Haymow) in Which the Chisago Lake People met for Worship in 1854. Here the congregation was Organized by Rev. Erland Carlsson May 12, 1854.

Rev. Erland Carlsson, who Organized the first Three Lutheran Churches in Minnesota, 1854.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. Carlsson stayed in the community only a few days, and then journeyed on to the settlement about fifteen miles south of Chisago Lake in Marine township, Washington county, and there on May 19 he organized a congregation which for many years was known as the Marine church, but which now is known as Elim Lutheran Church, Scandia. Thus, in the short space of a two weeks' visit in Minnesota

Territory, he had succeeded in organizing three Lutheran congregations. Among the scattered immigrants a unifying spiritual power had come in to gather them in the faith.

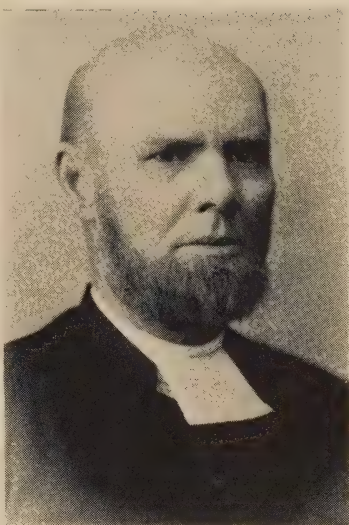
After Rev. Carlsson left, no ordained pastor was available to come and serve the churches he had organized, but theological student Eric Norelius came a few days after Carlsson had left, and spent the summer at Chisago Lake. He had studied at Capital University, a Lutheran school at Columbus, Ohio since 1851. While visiting friends in Illinois he heard of Rev. Carlsson's proposed trip to Minnesota, and intended to accompany him. He missed the boat and had to wait for the next one, arriving at St. Paul on May 21, 1854. He visited a few days with his Lutheran countrymen in St. Paul, and conducted services in a primitive school house on Jackson Street.

On May 25, which was Ascension Day, he preached for the first time at Chisago Lake. When Rev. Carlsson was there, one of the church members, Peter Berg, had offered the use of his new haymow as a temporary meeting house. In this unpretentious building the congregation was organized and there Norelius held services regularly throughout the summer. He also taught school in this log shack, the first school of any kind in the community. His activity extended to other places as much as time and energy permitted. He visited the Marine congregation a number of times. He often walked to Taylors Falls, nine miles from Chisago Lake, to conduct services on Sunday afternoons.

When Norelius left in September to return to school, Chisago Lake was without pastoral service. Attempts were made to secure an ordained pastor from Sweden, but with no success. In the spring of 1855 an urgent plea sent by one of the residents of Chisago Lake provoked a discussion of the needs of the brethren in Minnesota at a meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois, and it was decided to send Pehr A. Cederstam, a recent arrival from Sweden, to Chisago Lake as a licensed preacher. (He was ordained the following year.)

Arriving at Chisago Lake in the latter part of May, he preached his first sermon on Pentecost Sunday. From that time until the spring of 1858 he continued to serve the congregation, also devoting himself to the Lutheran groups in St. Paul, Marine, Taylors Falls, and Stillwater. He had no regular call from the congregation, and no definite salary until in 1857. It is probable that he was paid largely in produce during the first year or two.

At the time of organization of the Chisago Lake congregation, it was decided to build a small meeting house, eighteen by fourteen feet in size. This was completed by the time Cederstam arrived, and in it he conducted services, but it soon was too small. On July 4, 1855 the congregation voted to build a church. There was considerable bickering about the location of the new church. After much discussion it was decided to accept the lots offered by Per Anderson and Daniel Rättig. However, on September 12 the congregation met again and voted to build on "the two acres of F. Mobeck, the large open space on the so-called 'Norberg's Island.'" This is the site on which the present church is built. How it



Rev. P. A. Cederstam

was secured for the church is a story which reveals Cederstam's tact and courage. The congregation was on the point of serious dissension over the question of where the church should be built. Some thought Per Anderson's place was too far east, so they said they would build a church closer to their part of the settlement, near the present village of Lindstrom. Those south of the lake said they might as well have a church too. Those around Little Lake, a few miles northeast, said they should have a church. It seemed that the congregation might split into several contending groups.

They were agreed, however, that if they could get a piece of land on Mobeck's claim they would be satisfied. But Mobeck evidently had no intention of donating any land. One day Cederstam counted the money in his possession and found that by including some which he had received for subscriptions to *Hemlandet* he had exactly fifty dollars. He went to call on Frank Mobeck and said he wanted to buy some land. Mobeck was a bit suspicious at first but when Cederstam assured him that he was buying the land and would take the whole risk, Mobeck agreed to sell two acres for church and cemetery at twenty-five dollars per acre. Mrs. Mobeck wept tears of joy and Cederstam gave thanks to God. The following Sunday after morning wor-

ship Cederstam told the people that if they would agree and unite in building one church they could have the land on the Mobeck property. Yes, they agreed that would be the best place, but what would it cost? Cederstam told them, "The land is bought and paid for and you may have it for the church, if you all agree to that." The matter was soon settled. Then Cederstam announced, "You know I do not have much money, so if any of you want to contribute twenty-five or fifty cents to help pay for this land, it will be welcome." Within two weeks the members of the congregation brought a total of sixty dollars. The right location had been found for the church, the congregation had been saved from disintegration, and the way had been prepared for a strong unified Christian community, through the faith, wisdom, and courage of a twenty-five year old, newly arrived immigrant pastor. If the dissension had resulted in the break-up of the congregation it is more than likely that the entire community would have become a fertile soil for various denominations and sects and the community would have had no strong religious unifying force to hold it firmly together.

Another important step in the stabilizing and unifying of the congregation was its legal incorporation. This took place in the fall of the same year and was recorded on December 6, 1855 in the office of the

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Boom Times at Chisago Lake

"In the midst of the settlement a store has been established by a man who is not a Swede, and right next to him two Swedes are preparing to engage in the same business. Five miles south of Taylors Falls, about four miles from this settlement, one A. Smith has started a store with a good stock. And in Chisago City, on the southwestern edge of the settlement, where a New York company has laid out a town, is a good store. At this place also a mill and a saw operated by steam power are in process of construction and will no doubt be completed soon. The buildings are erected and the machinery installed. Turning now to the west, about two miles outside the settlement on the so-called "sun rise prairies" another town is springing up, which yields to no others, either in name or in enterprise. The town bears the name Washington and already boasts of two stores and a water power mill, not yet completed."

Letter written from Chisago Lake by P-M, published in *Hemlandet*, January 14, 1857, reprinted with translation in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America*, 1922-1923, P. 72.

Register of Deeds, County of Chisago, Minnesota Territory, in Book A of Bonds and Mortgages, pages 89 and 90, of Thomas Lucy, Register of Deeds. The Articles of Incorporation were signed by Hakan Swedberg and Peter Anderson.

Church discipline was a very real problem in the young congregation. The settlers were accustomed to the state church of Sweden, and the word "church discipline" had a very distasteful flavor to them. In Sweden church discipline was enforced by the sheriff or his officers, and the true Christian conception of church discipline had been allowed to lie dormant. Now they were members of a free church where they must learn to discipline themselves. This was no easy lesson. That the pastor or church council should take steps to warn members who were guilty of unchristian conduct, this seemed to be impertinent meddling. The first excommunication occurred on September 7, 1856. Gradually the people learned that it was necessary for the congregation to exercise the authority given to it by its own constitution, and that the decisions made by the congregation at its meetings should be respected. At first it was difficult to maintain order and decorum at the congregational meetings, since these people were not accustomed to self-government. Since the church in Sweden was supported by taxes it was hard for the newly arrived immigrants to realize that the church here was dependent on their voluntary financial support.

Erection of the church was begun in 1856. It was seventy by forty-eight feet in size, and eighteen feet high. Subscriptions totalling \$430.00 were secured among the members, and materials valued at about five hundred dollars were donated. The building was soon enclosed so it could be used but the interior was not finished until 1859. It was in this church that the Minnesota Conference was organized on October 8, 1858 and at that time it was still unfinished. It was enlarged a few years later and served its purpose until 1882, when it was torn down to make place for a large new brick church. In 1888 the new church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. It was rebuilt the same year, and this is the building in which the congregation still worships, and in which the Minnesota Conference will observe its ninetieth anniversary in 1948.

As stated previously, Rev. Cederstam had no permanent call to Chisago Lake. During the first two years of his pastorate the minutes give no indication as to his salary. On September 9, 1856 his term of service was extended "for at least another year." The first reference to pastor's



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. C. A. Hedengran

salary is in the minutes of a meeting on December 8, 1857, when it was resolved "that the salary of the present pastor, P. A. Cederstam, for a half year, reckoned from the first of last October, shall be \$1.00 for each communicant in the congregation and that this money shall be paid by April 1, 1858."

At the same meeting Cederstam announced that he preferred to leave the congregation in the spring of 1858. No one said a word against this, and the congregation proceeded to call another pastor. Three pastors in Sweden were nominated, and in case none of these would accept it was decided to ask Dr. Fjellstedt to select someone. However, all these calls and several later ones were in vain. When Cederstam moved away in the spring of 1858 the congregation was vacant and no pastor was secured until C. A. Hedengran came in August 1859.

During the vacancy the services were usually conducted by laymen.

Håkan Swedberg was the one whom the congregation now relied on for this important duty. Pastors came for occasional visits. Rev. J. P. C. Boren spent a month in Chisago Lake in the fall of 1858. When services were conducted by laymen, it was stipulated that one of Luther's sermons should preferably be used. Swedberg occupied a place of leadership for many years, seems to have had the confidence of the people in the community, and was one of the four lay delegates at the organization of the Conference.

Sunday school in Chisago Lake was begun on July 8, 1855, under the leadership of Gustaf Collin, Frank Mobeck, and H. N. Bystrom. Pastor Cederstam confirmed the first class, consisting of seventeen pupils, on August 19, 1855. Week-day church school was begun in 1859 and during the greater part of the history of this congregation the parochial school has been a significant part of the church life. Johan Peterson was the first school teacher. His salary consisted of eight bushels of grain and \$4.00 in cash per month. School was held six months per year. The salary was to be paid by those who had children in school. No reports are given as to the enrollment or attendance during the early years. School was held in four places, in the homes of church members.

The first parsonage was built in the fall of 1859. Originally the two-acre plot on which the church was built was used also for cemetery, and several burials took place there. In 1859 it was decided to locate the cemetery elsewhere and to build the parsonage next to the church. (Some of the original burials were unearthed in 1941 when a trench was dug for water pipes to the new church basement.)

During the first years of the history of Chisago Lake at least two other denominations made attempts to win adherents in the community, and had some slight success. A Methodist minister, Carl P. Agrelius, visited Chisago Lake in 1854, while Eric Norelius was there, and at least on one occasion arose at the meeting on a Sunday after Norelius had preached, and gave the people the benefit of another sermon while they were assembled. He told them that he had been a pastor in the state church of Sweden for twenty-six years, and now he was a Methodist, so he could serve the people either way they wanted it. During the same summer a Baptist minister, F. O. Nilson, visited at Chisago Lake. Neither of these two gained a large hearing, but both succeeded in organizing small congregations. The Methodists later centered their activities in Lindstrom, two miles away, and the congregation is still

in existence. The Baptist congregation soon disappeared as the members moved away. Some of them became active leaders in the Baptist church at Cambridge. In later years the Mission Covenant established a congregation at Chisago Lake, but it gradually dwindled away and their meeting house was sold to the Lutherans for use as a chapel. For many years there has been only one church in Center City, the Chisago Lake Lutheran Church.

Carl August Hedengran, the first permanent pastor of the Chisago Lake Church, had come to America in 1850 at the age of twenty-nine. He had been reared in a Christian home but in his youth had mingled with ungodly companions and read some books that led him to doubt the truth of the Bible. The California gold rush attracted him to America. However, he never went to California. After a few years in Illinois he came to Carver county, Minnesota. There he came under Rev. Peter Carlson's influence and after severe spiritual and mental anguish he was converted in 1857. Soon he began to participate in the public services at West Union. In 1859 he accompanied Peter Carlson on a visit to Chisago Lake. The result was that he received a call to become pastor of this congregation. He accepted, and was ordained at the organization meeting of the Augustana Synod in June 1860. He served Chisago Lake until 1873, and saw the congregation grow to a membership of 788 communicants.

Hedengran's pastorate was a difficult and trying period. The nation was experiencing the hardships and sorrows of war and reconstruction, and every community was affected. Even more serious, from a local point of view, were the frequent dissensions in the congregation. Though much of it seems trivial after the lapse of eighty-five years, the trouble was very real at the time and threatened the unity and the very life of the congregation. A great ado was made over such matters as the location of parsonage and cemetery. Much of the dissension was a result of personal feelings towards Hedengran. Perhaps he was not sufficiently experienced and trained to cope with the problems, but it is evident that some church members were eager to get him into trouble. One man wrote out a lengthy accusation against Hedengran because he had failed to visit him when he was ill and in great anguish of soul. His "illness" was really ill will against the pastor. His alleged anguish was his feeling that he might suffer eternal perdition because he had been guilty of helping to call Hedengran as pastor at Chisago Lake. Hedengran had the sense to ignore this maudlin display.

Another incident, however, reveals the general lack of understanding of psychological problems. It started with a neighborhood quarrel over fences. Then an old couple accused a woman of stealing a household article. The pastor and the church council required the old couple to prove their charges or else retract them. Faced with this dilemma they made peace with the neighbor woman. But a few months later they renewed their charges against her, and even said she was persecuting them and threatening their lives through sorcery. They had been saved, they said, by the fortunate discovery of her means of witchcraft, a tangled mass of rags hidden under their back steps. The church council now excluded the old man and woman from the congregation, and the whole congregation took sides for a showdown. Letters and charges went to Conference and Synod. The ecclesiastical machinery began to move and the Synodical president and all the pastors of the Minnesota Conference went to Chisago Lake in July 1865 to investigate the matter. The church council was upheld and the president of the Synod reported the following year that the case had been settled. Nothing further is stated, however, as to what happened to the old couple. It is quite evident that the real need in this case was not vindication of pastor and church council by higher ecclesiastical authorities, but an understanding of what constitutes mental disorder. There should have been means of providing proper care for the helpless and hapless old couple suffering from paranoic tendencies and probably senility. Neither church nor state knew much about mental disease at that time. Minnesota sent some of its worst cases to asylums in other states. The first hospital for the mentally diseased in this state was established in 1866 in St. Peter.

Through many vicissitudes Hedengran continued to serve the congregation for fourteen years. When he retired in 1873 the congregation graciously voted him a pension for life. He died October 31, 1880, and was buried in the Chisago Lake cemetery, where a humble monument marks his grave.

Rev. J. J. Frodeen became Hedengran's successor as pastor in Chisago Lake, serving from 1874 to 1889.

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Minnesota Christmas

"In descriptions of pioneer times it is often related how the Scandinavian immigrants celebrated their festivals in the same way as they had done in the old country. They willingly adopted

new ones, especially the Fourth of July, but they didn't forget their old midsummer festivals; they had their Easter celebration and made the most of the Christmas season, which has always been the climax of the year in the Scandinavian countries. Many of the old folkways now belong to the past, but especially in regard to dishes that are a part of the different festivals, the traditions are rather strong. A gourmet seeking Scandinavian dishes could stop anywhere in Minnesota and have his appetite appeased, a Minneapolis newspaper reporter says (Minneapolis Sunday Tribune, December 24, 1944): 'Should the traveler arrive for Christmas eve he would find the houses brimming with festivity, dining tables laden with food.

"Lutefisk would be there in big portions with butter or cream gravy, potato sausage and Swedish meat balls, pickled herring and a dozen other piquant appetizers, brown Swedish beans with their sweet sour sauce, rice pudding and lingon berries, cakes and cookies in so great a variety that it is hardly possible to eat a sample of each spritz, rosettes, smörbakelse, kringler, pepparkakor and many more. Feasting would go on far into the evening.

"The next morning, long before daylight, the household would be astir and off to Christmas services, formerly in a colorful procession of sleds piled deep with hay and blankets, lanterns swinging, horses blowing steam into the cold air, runners creaking over the clean snow, sleighbells jingling."

Albin Widen, "Scandinavian Folklore and Immigrant Ballads" in *Bulletin of the American Institute of Swedish Arts, Literature and Science*, Vol. 2, No. 1, January-March, 1947, P. 42.

CHAPTER 4.

St. Paul

When Minnesota Territory was established by act of Congress on March 3, 1849, St. Paul was designated as the capital. In the entire territory there were only some 3,000 white persons, and of these, about 900 were residents of St. Paul. It was a little frontier town where the smoke from Indian teepees could be seen on the horizon and where occasional brawls and skirmishes between hostile groups of Chippewa and Sioux were not unusual, even on the street corners of the village.

St. Paul was one of the oldest towns in the territory. In 1849 it could look back upon a history of ten years. Its original settlers were whiskey sellers who had been driven off the Fort Snelling reservation. They were not permitted to carry on their trade west of the Mississippi because that region was still in possession of the Indians. The land between the Mississippi and the St. Croix had been ceded by the Indians in 1837, and opened for white settlers. In 1839 when the liquor sellers were ordered off the military reservation, they crossed the river and went a few miles down, close to the present down town section of St. Paul, and carried on their nefarious business. The government could forbid the sale of liquor on Indian lands, but they could not stop an Indian from crossing the river in his canoe. The original name of the new village was Pig's Eye, from a half breed Frenchman, "Pig's Eye Parrant," one of the original settlers, so nicknamed because of the alleged similarity of his face to that of a porker.

In 1841 a Catholic priest, Father Galtier, came to this region, and finding about a hundred people of his faith established the "Chapel of St. Paul" as a Catholic mission. From this mission the village soon came to be known as St. Paul. A post office was established in 1846, and the place grew in importance as a river port and a commercial center. Its only real rival was Stillwater.

As soon as St. Paul had become the capital, a boom period began. New settlers were arriving on every boat, cargoes of beef and pork, flour and beans, axes, plows, nails, glass, clothing, and shoes were being unloaded, business flourished, buildings were being erected, speculators were running around with wads of money, buying today, selling tomorrow, dreaming of new cities, railroads, mills, factories, universities.

As might be expected, the stream of incoming settlers also included some Lutheran people. They were generally immigrants from the Lutheran lands of Europe, the Scandinavian countries and Germany. Some came directly to Minnesota when they arrived in America, others had stayed for a short time in Illinois or other states to the east. In 1850 the young boom city had the pleasure of seeing the celebrated Swedish author, Fredrika Bremer. Undoubtedly her writings helped to create an interest in Minnesota among her countrymen.

The beginnings of Lutheranism in St. Paul may be traced back to 1852, when a company of four Swedish families and two young men settled there. These were: N. P. Ofelt and family; Johan Johanson with three children; Swen Rosenquist and family; Nils Nyberg and Carl Bjarstedt, all of whom came to St. Paul directly after their arrival in America. Henry Russel and family came from Boston where he had lived twelve years. Others who had joined the group at various places along the way were J. Tidlund and family, P. M. Anderson, and a Mr. Ringdahl, all of whom had come to America the previous year. When they arrived in St. Paul they found only two others of their countrymen who were here before them: Nils Nilson, a servant for a Dr. Sweeney; and A. J. Ekman. There was another Swede sojourning in the region prior to this, Jacob Fahlstrom, who said he had been around Fort Snelling since about 1825. Though many details of his life are obscure, it is known that he had been a fur trader in the Minnesota country for many years, had been converted to Methodism at the Red Rock Methodist Indian mission and for a time tried to serve as a missionary among the Indians. He had been married twice, both of his wives being Indian women. He lived in St. Paul for a time in the 1840's, but later moved to the vicinity of Afton and died there.

In 1853 a number of Swedish immigrants arrived in St. Paul. Among these were a tailor, Johan Johansson, (not the same as the Johanson mentioned above), John Johnson, a carpenter, and the Methodist minister, Carl P. Agrelius.

It is not known if Rev. Unonius, the Episcopal minister, conducted services in St. Paul, but it is very likely that, on his visit to Chisago Lake in September, 1852, he also visited St. Paul and preached for his countrymen in the capital of Minnesota. The Methodists and Baptists made a beginning of church work among the immigrants in St. Paul before any Lutheran organization was effected, but their early efforts brought very meager results.



PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

St. Paul in 1853

The first definite step towards the establishing of a Lutheran congregation is mentioned in the following letter which was written in St. Paul on March 15, 1854, and sent to Rev. T. N. Hasselquist in Galesburg, Illinois:

"We take the liberty to turn to you for enlightenment concerning a matter of great importance to us Scandinavians residing in St. Paul. On Sunday, February 26, a general meeting of Swedes and Norwegians took place, at which a Scandinavian Lutheran congregation was organized and the undersigned were elected trustees.

"But our congregation is without a pastor, a need which it is our primary duty to take care of. At the suggestion of one of the members of the congregation, Frank Mobeck, we are taking the liberty of turning to you for advice and information about this matter. There are, to be sure, two Scandinavian ministers here, Rev. Agrelius, and Mr. Tidlund, formerly a tailor and recently ordained a minister; but since these men belong to the Methodist faith, and since we have no desire to belong to their church and much less to forsake our good old Lutheran doctrine, wherein our fathers in the old country for centuries have lived in piety and died a blessed death, and which we ourselves before God and the congregation of our own free will declared that it was our intention to confess through all our days, therefore it is highly important that we secure a zealous pastor, the sooner the better, who can

preach the Word of God as we have been accustomed to hear it, and who can train the children so they will be thoroughly grounded in our most holy faith.

"We consider it important to mention that the Scandinavian population in Minnesota is estimated to be about 600; the new settlement at Chisago Lake 200; in Marine 100; in St. Paul 150; in various other places 150. Only a few of these have affiliated with the Methodists. As far as we know, there is no Evangelical Lutheran pastor stationed in Minnesota as yet. We do not know to what authority we should direct our request for a pastor; therefore we wish to ask you to help us in this and to present our needs and our desire to the proper place. As to the support of a pastor we have the encouraging hope of receiving aid from the American Home Mission Society in the amount of some \$300 to \$500. Furthermore, we have invited our countrymen at Chisago Lake to share a pastor with us and share in his support until our congregations individually are able to support a pastor in each place. The above-mentioned aid together with whatever the people can contribute, each one according to his ability, should be enough to pay the salary of a minister in moderate circumstances.

"We also wish to present our hearty desire and request that you would visit us as soon as possible, if it is within your ability to do so, and to stay here with us for some time. There are several reasons why we wish to have you come. The chief reason is that we might have the opportunity to be edified by your richly instructive sermons and to be warmed in our zeal for religion and church, which otherwise through lack of a pastor, has a tendency to cool. However, we meet together and read our postils but if we have to wait a long time for a pastor, there will certainly be many who will leave us and join the fanatical Methodists, and our congregation would be dissolved. But your presence, even if only for a short time, will do a great deal to aid and strengthen the progress of the congregation. It is with joy that we mention the fact that our congregation, which had only twenty-one members at the time of its organization, has already increased to a membership of seventy-two, and many others have declared their intention of joining with us. Assured of your zeal for religion and for the Lutheran Church, we have had the courage to present these our desires to you and we would request an early reply. Wishing you God's grace and blessing, we sign on behalf of the congregation.

"Frank Mobeck, C. J. Lindstrom, C. A. Hedengran,
P. M. Anderson, A. J. Ekman."

The results of this letter are known to us from the previous chapter. Erland Carlsson of Chicago came up to Minnesota in the spring, and on May 6 led them in organizing a Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran congregation. At the meeting on February 26 no constitution was adopted. Now under Carlsson's leadership this matter was taken care of. The number of members was stated as being seventy-six.

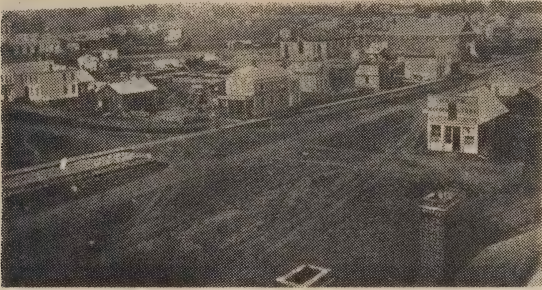


PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

St. Paul in 1857

At this time St. Paul was in the midst of the territorial boom which lasted until 1857. New settlers were arriving every week, new stores were being established, and speculation was inflating the price of real estate to unreasonable heights. The optimists seemed to think there could be no limit to the developments that would come in the new Territory. In August of 1857 the bubble burst very suddenly. The failure of several large companies in the east soon had a serious effect on the finances of the entire country. Eastern investors drained the pioneer settlements of money, and the boom stopped at once. Speculators vanished from the Territory—if they had money enough to go anywhere else. Farmers who had not speculated but had their own farms to supply their needs, were relatively secure, but in the cities everyone was seriously affected by the stringent financial conditions. In many cases individuals could not get enough money together in a month's time to buy a postage stamp.

In such circumstances it is not surprising that the First Lutheran congregation in St. Paul also lost members. However, it seems that even before the panic of 1857 some of the members of the church had moved out to other settlements in the Territory. The small towns and

the rural areas, with an abundance of cheap land and almost unlimited opportunities evidently had a greater appeal to the immigrants than the city of St. Paul could provide. Many of the original leaders of the church moved away including Frank Mobeck to Chisago Lake, C. A. Hedengran to Carver County. A. J. Ekman died in 1856. The depletion of the membership was so serious that it threatened the very existence of the little congregation, and for a time it lived a rather precarious life.

When P. A. Cederstam was sent to Chisago Lake in 1855 by the Synod of Northern Illinois it was intended that he should also serve the church in St. Paul. However, his many duties, and the difficulty of transportation made it impossible for him to give St. Paul anything more than an occasional service. Once in a while there were visits by other clergymen, including L. P. Esbjörn, Erland Carlsson, and Eric Norelius. But the steady, continuous work of a permanent pastor was lacking, and in the excitement and the flux of a frontier city this was a serious lack. About this time the problems of the new congregation were increased by the coming in of a group of new people who had some ideas of their own which they tried in a subtle manner to foist upon the congregation. They wanted to forbid all pastors of the Synod of Northern Illinois to preach to the congregation. A constitution with such a provision was adopted by the rebellious group at a meeting held at the home of one of them in May, 1858.

A few days later, on May 17, a congregational meeting was held, with Rev. Cederstam as chairman to discuss this grave situation. The call for this meeting was signed by John Johnson, Johan Johansson, and M. Nilsen. After extended discussion of the matter the congregation adopted the following resolution:

"This congregation, which was organized on May 6, 1854, by the Lutheran pastor, Erland Carlsson of Chicago, Illinois, has since its beginning been without pastoral care, except for occasional visits by the Swedish pastors, some here in Minnesota, some in Illinois. And since the greater portion of the members of this congregation have moved away from here and very few Scandinavians have stayed here in recent times, therefore the establishment of the congregation had been neglected longer than it ought to have been; nevertheless, the remaining members have always met for public worship almost every Sunday, and also on week days when possible, which meetings have been more or less well attended. Last fall the Scandinavian population here in St. Paul was found to have increased by the arrival of several Norwegian



PHOTO COURTESY FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, ST. PAUL

*Johan Johansson, pioneer layman of St. Paul. Second treasurer of the Minnesota Conference. Lay missionary.
Mrs. Johan Johansson*

and Danish families which seemed to be interested in our humble Zion, and a general meeting was held for the purpose of arranging the matters pertaining to the church. Several meetings have been held during the past winter for this purpose. But there has been dissension between the members of the congregation and those who had lately arrived, not about the faith and the confession of the congregation, but as to which synod the congregation should formally affiliate with; the members of the congregation, however, have had hopes of an agreement, wherefore they have so far participated in these meetings.

"A meeting was held at Mr. Jorgenson's on the 13th ult., at which the aforementioned Scandinavians, without having been commissioned to do so at any previous meeting, presented a proposed constitution, which they demanded should be accepted by the members of the congregation together with themselves. And since one of the unchangeable articles contained the provision that pastors of the Synod of Northern Illinois never should be permitted to speak or preach in this congregation or to have anything whatever to do with it, therefore the members of this congregation were of the opinion that under no conditions could such a law be adopted by the congregation: First, because we consider it unchristian and contrary to the freedom of this country;

that, since it is well known that the ministers who belong to the Synod of Northern Illinois, are permitted, according to decision of the Synod, to believe and teach in accordance with the fundamental faith and confession of the Lutheran Church, which has been accepted by this congregation; in the second place, since this congregation was organized or established by Pastor E. Carlsson, who at that time was, and still is affiliated with this synod, and since the pastors in this synod are the only ones who have tried to do anything for the welfare of the congregation: therefore we consider it unchristian to shut these pastors out of the congregation, especially when it is without pastoral care and they are willing to visit us. Now since those who have formulated this constitution and want to force it through, refuse to permit the slightest change in it, and since those persons never have been received as members in this congregation according to its constitution, therefore it was unanimously decided that the congregation for the time being shall abide by the constitution which was adopted by the congregation on May 6, 1854. It was further decided that the congregation choose two deacons for one year, and those elected were Johan Johansson and John Johnson; and that the congregation shall be legally incorporated as soon as possible."

On the 24th day of May the congregation had another meeting, at which it was decided that those who desired to be members of the congregation should sign their names in the church book. Those who signed were: John Johnson, his wife, Christine, and two daughters, Emma and Charlotte Marie; Johan Johansson and his wife, Hedvig C.; Martin Nilsen and his wife Christine, and daughter Louise Christine; Hakan Olsson; Bengt Jonsson, and T. Nygren. Twelve members. The prospects for the congregation did not seem very bright, especially

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St. Paul in 1850

We sped rapidly past it (Kaposia) for the Mississippi was here as clear and deep as our own river Götha, and the next moment, taking an abrupt turn to the left, St. Paul's was before us, standing upon a high bluff on the eastern bank of the Mississippi; behind it the blue arch of heaven, and far below it the Great River, and before it, extending right and left, beautiful valleys, with their verdant hill sides scattered with wood—a really grand and commanding situation—affording the most beautiful views.

Fredrika Bremer, *The Homes of the New World*, 11, 24 (October 25, 1850).

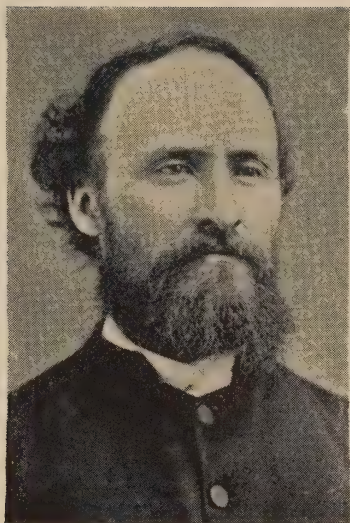


PHOTO COURTESY CAMBRIDGE LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Rev. Jonas Auslund**Mrs. Jonas Auslund*

since they had no pastor and scant hope of getting one. But Johan Johansson, a pious and able layman, was in charge of the services as long as the congregation was vacant. The St. Paul Directory for 1866 contains this listing: Johanson, John Swede Mission, h Jefferson nr Woodward. He was also diligent in aiding the immigrants who arrived in the city. The 1869 Directory lists him as agent of the Scandinavian Emigration Society. He represented the St. Paul congregation at almost every Conference meeting in the fifties and sixties and served several years as Conference treasurer.

In the summer of 1857, when P. A. Cederstam was serving as delegate to the Minnesota constitutional convention, he conducted services on Sundays for the Scandinavian Lutherans. No regular pastor was secured until the fall of 1860, when Eric Norelius was called to serve part time. His main work, however, was to be travelling missionary in Minnesota. (See Chapter 18). His salary was paid through home mission offerings. The St. Paul congregation promised to pay the rent for a house in remuneration for his services. Though he was travelling the larger part of the time, he devoted his attention to St. Paul whenever he was home. This call was for one year only. During this time the congregation succeeded in buying a church lot, in what was then the

northern part of the city. Most of the members at that time lived in the district known as "Svenska dalen" (Swedish valley), along Phalen Creek. The lot was purchased from Henry Schurmeier for \$525. The members of the congregation subscribed \$266, and from other residents of the city \$59.50 was secured. The down payment on the lot was \$50.00, and the balance was to be paid in annual payments of \$100, with interest at ten per cent.

In the fall of 1861 Norelius left, and no permanent pastor was secured until ten years later, when Rev. Jonas Auslund accepted a call. In the meantime a church had been built. The congregation numbered less than fifty members, and was unable to finance the erection of a church. Unable to do as the rural congregations, where the members cut logs and built their church at small expense, the St. Paul congregation found it necessary to appeal for aid. The Conference and the Synod requested their constituent congregations to lift offerings to help the St. Paul people build a church. Norelius was asked to go east to solicit funds for the purpose, but the times were unfavorable and it seems that he did not go. In 1867 the Conference requested Cederstam to spend a few months in St. Paul to supervise the work. While he was there, the first church was built, at the southeast corner of Bradley and Patridge, about two or three blocks from the present church. It was enlarged in 1878, and as the congregation was growing rapidly, a new church was built in 1883.

During the decade that the congregation was vacant, the city of St. Paul was growing rapidly. In 1870 the population was nearly 30,000, yet the First Lutheran Church, sixteen years old, had only forty-three communicant members. Besides the problem of getting a pastor, the congregation had been hindered greatly by dissension. This had been due partly to difference of nationality and language. In 1870 a division occurred and the congregation became a Swedish group. During Auslund's pastorate another cause of disunity arose, centering around the Waldenstrom controversy. Some of the church members, including several deacons and trustees, were in favor of letting the "Mission Friend" preachers use the church. In 1874 this matter was settled, a majority of the members holding with Auslund that the heterodox ministers should not be permitted to conduct services.

Auslund served from 1871 to 1877, and this was a period of growth and development in the membership and stability of the church. When he left there were 310 communicants.

Elim Church, Scandia

The white man's entry into Minnesota for nearly two centuries was by means of water highways. The first explorers came via Lake Superior, nearly three centuries ago. Almost at the same time the Mississippi was explored as far up as to St. Anthony Falls and a little beyond. The first actual settlers—the Selkirk Colony—came from Canada by a third waterway, the Red River.

When the main stream of settlers began to come, about 1840, Washington county occupied a strategic position. A glance at the map and a brief review of history will show why this was so. Washington county lies between the Mississippi and the St. Croix Rivers. The land west of the Mississippi was not open for settlement by white people until 1852. The land between the Mississippi and the St. Croix was ceded by the Indians in 1837. Consequently, for prospective settlers coming up the Mississippi to Minnesota in the late 'thirties and the 'forties, Washington county offered the first opportunity. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first post office in Minnesota was at Point Douglas, in Washington county (1840); the first commercial sawmill in Minnesota was at Marine, in Washington county (1839); and the first farming (except at military forts and Indian missions) was in the southern part of Washington county (1843).



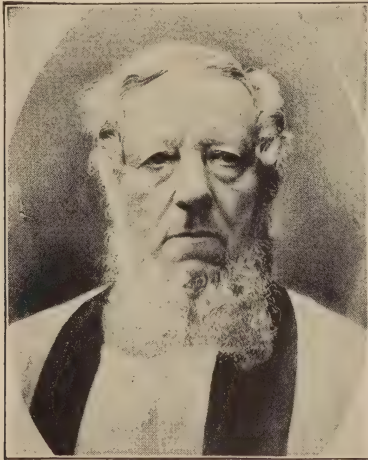
A few farmers settled around Cottage Grove, Red Rock, and other parts of southern Washington county in the 'forties, but these numbered only about fifteen or twenty. In the next few years, as logging camps increased in number and demanded more and more food for men, more hay and feed for oxen, a stimulus was given to agriculture, and in the 1850's the growth of the towns and cities helped greatly to increase the demand for farm products. St. Paul and Stillwater being the chief towns of any size, it was to be expected that the expansion of agriculture would be in the vicinity of those cities.

Among the men who came to Washington county in 1851 to look for work and for a place to settle was a Swedish immigrant by the name of Daniel Nilson. He had come to America the previous year, and during his first winter in this country he worked for a farmer near Moline, Illinois, cutting 1,500 fence rails, for which he received as remuneration one cow.

With his wife and three children, and his cow, he came to Marine in the summer of 1851. For a time he worked in Marine but soon moved out to a claim about three miles west of the village. Another family, Magnus Englund, together with Mrs. Englund's father and several brothers had also come to this settlement at about the same time as the Nilson's. The following year these two families moved a few miles farther north to Hay Lake, one and one-half miles south of the present village of Scandia. There Nilson settled on a claim which had been first taken by three young men, Oscar Roos, Carl Fernstrom, and August Sandahl. They came to this place October 21, 1850, built a small cabin, and stayed over winter. A monument was erected on the spot in 1900, marking it as the place where Swedish immigrants first settled in Minnesota. Some writers discount the significance of this claim, since the original settlers stayed only three or four months. It is a question that cannot be given a final answer, the interpretation being a matter of personal opinion. Historical accuracy would require us to say that the first Swedish settlement in Minnesota was the one established at Hay Lake by Roos, Fernstrom, and Sandahl, but that the first Swedish settlement which has had a continuous existence was the one established by Per Anderson and his companions at Chisago Lake in the spring of 1851. The arrival of Daniel Nilson at Marine was somewhat later the same year.

During that summer a few others arrived, Jens Okeson, wife and one child; and Sven W. Anderson, wife, and two children. In the fol-

lowing years more settlers arrived. Among these were Johannes Peterson with his wife and four children, in 1853. It was his place, near the present village of Copas, that for many years went under the name "Islycke," of "Yfslycke," from the name of Peterson's old home in Sweden. The Peterson family were hospitable, and their house was a favorite stopping place as we have seen in the story of the men who organized the Minnesota Conference.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. Gustaf Unonius

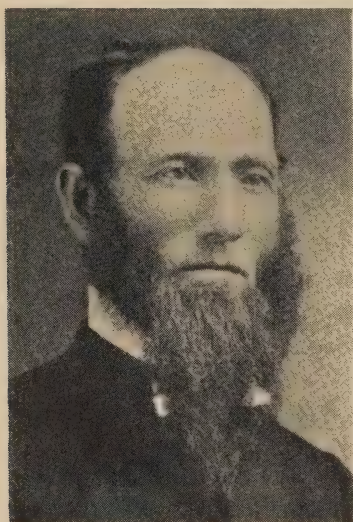
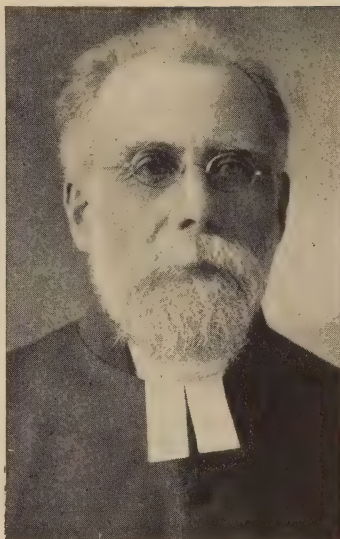
When the Episcopal minister, Gustaf Unonius, visited Chisago Lake in the fall of 1852, he also conducted services in the settlement in the town of Marine. On the 18th of September, in Daniel Nilson's house, Rev. Unonius officiated at the wedding of Nilson's daughter Helena and a young German, Frederick H. Lammers. She is thought to have been the first Swedish bride in Minnesota. On the same day Unonius also baptized two children, and this is believed to have been the first baptism of children of Swedish parentage in Minnesota.

We have already given in previous chapters, the account of the missionary journey of Rev. Erland Carlsson to Minnesota in the spring of 1854, at which time he organized the First Lutheran Church of St. Paul on May 6 and the Chisago Lake Lutheran Church on May 12. On this trip he also visited the Marine settlement and met with the

settlers in Daniel Nilson's home. A congregation was organized, but no minutes of the meeting have been preserved. The generally accepted date is May 19, 1854. In a letter to Dr. Peter Fjellstedt, written by Erland Carlsson on July 10, 1854, he wrote: "On the way home (from Chisago Lake) I visited another Swedish settlement near Marine Mills, about halfway between Chisago Lake and St. Paul, where another Swedish Lutheran congregation was organized, with almost as many members as the congregation in St. Paul, about fifty communicants and eighty altogether, counting adults and children." No list of the names of charter members has been preserved.

During the summer of 1854, when Eric Norelius, as a student, served in Chisago Lake, he also made some visits to the Marine settlement and conducted services. He considered this settlement as having rather poor prospects at the time. Rev. T. N. Hasselquist of Galesburg, Illinois, visited the community in November, 1854. In the spring of 1855 P. A. Cederstam came to Chisago Lake, and during his three year pastorate at that place he usually held services in Marine once a month. At first the meetings were generally held in Daniel Nilson's home. Nilson was a hard worker and took good care of what he had. His family had the same qualities, and it was not long before they had built a comfortable house and good farm buildings. They were always glad to open their home for the religious meetings, and to provide lodging for the minister when he came. After some fifteen years at Marine, Nilson moved to Kandiyohi county and settled on the west shore of Green Lake.

On December 16, 1855, the congregation had a business meeting with P. A. Cederstam as chairman. According to the minutes of this meeting a constitution was adopted and three deacons were elected. From this it would seem that the organization in 1854 probably was not completed, or, since no minutes had been preserved, perhaps it was considered necessary to reorganize the congregation. For many years the date of organization was given as 1855 in the synodical statistics. The congregation was not incorporated until 1894. It was known as the Marine Church until 1872 when a congregation was organized in the village of Marine. Then it was called "Marine Rural Church" until its incorporation when it was given the name "Elim Church, Scandia." The township of Marine had been changed to "New Scandia" in 1893. A small log cabin church was built in 1855, thirty by twenty feet in size. This was built near the Nilson home, two or three miles south of the present Elim Church of Scandia. The first church was not ele-

*Rev. L. O. Lindh*

COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. A. Lindholm

gant, but served its purpose some five or six years. Since it was located in the southern part of the settlement, few of the people in the northern part of the community helped in building it. During the early years the congregation was quite frequently torn by dissension. At last they agreed on a new location, at about the center of the settlement, and in 1861 a frame church was built there, fifty by thirty-six feet in size. It stood on the opposite side of the road from the present church, where the cemetery now is located. When it was built, C. A. Hedengran of Chisago Lake was giving part time service as pastor there.

Few if any congregations in the Minnesota Conference have had to build as many churches as the Elim congregation of Scandia. No less than six churches have been erected. As already mentioned, the first was a small log cabin, which served until 1861. The frame church built that year was replaced by a larger one in 1874. Ten years later, September 9, 1884, this church was demolished by a tornado. The following year a brick church was erected, which stood until 1907 when on May 21 it was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. Preparations were made for a new church, and on December 17, 1908 it was ready

for dedication services. This church also was destroyed by fire, of undetermined origin, in June 1930. The present church, built in 1930, is the sixth one in which the Elim congregation has worshipped. In spite of these adversities, the congregation has grown to be one of the strongest rural churches in the state, and has often been referred to as one of the steadfast and conservative Lutheran country churches in Minnesota.

The congregation had no resident pastor until 1862, when Rev. John Pehrson came. When he resigned in 1864 the congregation had 109 communicants. Rev. Aron Lindholm, ordained 1864, became Pehrson's successor but remained less than two years. Rev. J. P. Lundblad came following his ordination in 1866 but stayed only one year. After a vacancy of two years, the congregation was served by Rev. L. O. Lindh for a period of ten years, 1869-1879. The membership in this decade increased to 412 communicants, although the members living in the village of Marine withdrew in 1872 to organize a new congregation. This was done with the consent and approval of the parent church. (Chapter 31.)

CHAPTER 6.

Vasa

Goodhue county has been a stronghold of Lutheranism since pioneer days. Vasa is a name well known in Minnesota as a typical colony of Lutheran immigrants, where frontier hardships were overcome and where by hard work and faithful pastoral leadership the church was firmly established.

The name of Eric Norelius is inseparably connected with Vasa. The Minnesota Conference and the entire Augustana Synod benefited by his work and his personality, but he belonged specifically to Vasa, for he organized that congregation, served it almost continuously for more than fifty years, had his home there most of the time from 1856 until his death in 1916. His last resting place is in the Vasa churchyard.

Goodhue county was in the region ceded by the Sioux Indians in the fall of 1851. Prior to that, there was no land in Minnesota open for settlement west of the Mississippi. Red Wing had long been an Indian village, and an Indian mission had been established there in 1836 by Protestant missionaries from Switzerland. After the land had been ceded to the government, removal of the Indians began, but this was a gradual process, and it was not until in 1853 that white settlement was begun. The first company of Swedish Lutheran immigrants arrived there in the fall of 1853. "Red Wing's village" still numbered several hundred Sioux Indian teepees. White men had built four little houses. But soon the red man would be gone.

The leader of the first immigrant group was Hans Mattson, who later achieved a measure of fame as emigration agent, colonel in the Union army, secretary of state in Minnesota, and consul general to India. He was instrumental in bringing many Lutherans to Minnesota and the Northwest, but he himself did not remain a member of the Lutheran Church in his later years.

Mattson was from Skåne, in the southern part of Sweden. The greater number of the early Vasa colonists were from the same province. There were many among them with qualities of leadership, able and willing to work, capable of managing their farms well, and consequently the community prospered, except for a setback during the panic of 1857.



PHOTO FROM VASA ILLUSTRATA,
COURTESY VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Hans Mattson
Leader of First Settlers at Vasa.

In October, 1853, Mattson and his companions came to St. Paul. There they heard of the possibilities of obtaining land in Goodhue county. While some of the people found work in St. Paul, Mattson and four other men journeyed to Red Wing and went to see the surrounding area. A few miles up from the river they saw what they wanted. There were rolling hills, partly covered with oak and other hardwood that would furnish building materials and fuel; open prairies among the hills, where they could soon begin to plow; good soil, good water.

Pleased with the prospects, they returned to St. Paul, and a plan of procedure was agreed upon. Since winter was near at hand, those with families were to stay in St. Paul until spring. Mattson and two other men, with a tent, a stove, and provisions, returned to Red Wing, went out to the land they had seen, and took claims for themselves and the rest of their company, by writing their names on trees. Then they built a cabin suitable to live in through the winter. A few weeks later two of the families came from St. Paul, and in the summer of 1854 eight other families arrived. By 1856, there were a hundred persons in the colony.

The first claims were along the creeks, or where springs were found that could supply the settlers with water. However, it was soon found that good water was available in most places by digging eight or ten feet. (This is not true today, as the water level has declined considerably.) The soil was fertile, and there were small open prairies, making it possible to start farming without first clearing the land of trees and brush. By 1856 a number of fields were under cultivation and comfortable homes had been built.

The first settlers who came with Hans Mattson were his brother-in-law, S. J. Willard, who had been a schoolmaster in Sweden; Peter

Sjogren (who changed his name to Green;) Carl Roos; and Anders G. Kempe. The first claims were in the immediate vicinity of the present villages of Vasa and White Rock. Later colonists arriving from Sweden settled in the surrounding regions, occupying the greater part of the land in the following townships: Red Wing, Burnside, Welch, Cannon Falls, Vasa, Featherston, Goodhue, Belle Creek, and Leon. In this area the Minnesota Conference today has eight congregations and one of its institutions. It was also in this area that Gustavus Adolphus College had its beginning.

It was in 1855 that Eric Norelius first visited Goodhue county and organized two Lutheran congregations there. The government land office was in Red Wing at that time, and there was a feverish activity, as each settler was eagerly trying to grasp the best piece of land. Speculation was a free-for-all affair, as we can see by the following classic description given us by Norelius: "One man—a Swede, as I learned afterwards—who was engaged in building a shack which was to serve as some kind of office, attracted my attention by his ridiculous, assumed air of big business. He had folded some paper money the long way and held it between his fingers. In his pockets he had stuck some documents which were supposed to be deeds. With a pencil behind his ear and his hat far back on his head, he ran back and forth on the street, waving his money, fingering his documents, and talking big words with everyone about his real estate affairs, making himself out to be a rich man. I learned later that the poor fellow probably had no more than the four paper bills that he carried between his fingers, and so illiterate that he could hardly write his own name."

In boom times, when men are mostly concerned about material things, it is not easy to lead them to think seriously of their spiritual welfare. But Norelius succeeded in gathering about a hundred of his Lutheran countrymen in Red Wing on Saturday evening, September 1, 1855, in the Presbyterian church. This was the first Lutheran service held in Red Wing. On the next day he had another service, with still larger attendance. It was then agreed that they should meet on Monday evening, September 3, to organize a congregation.

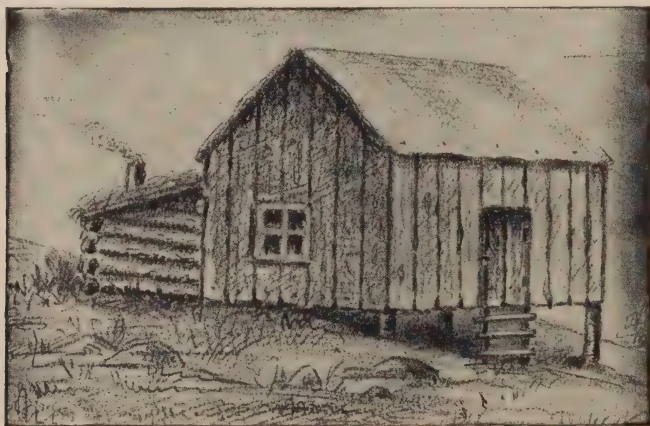
On Sunday afternoon a man by the name of August Johnson came in from the "Mattson settlement," twelve miles away to ask Norelius to visit that community. He went with him, riding horseback on Johnson's horse. Arriving at the place they immediately went to work summoning the neighbors to meet for a service the following morning



Rev. and Mrs. Eric Norelius in 1855. She was Inga Charlotte Peterson, 17 years old at the time of their marriage, June 10, 1855. Her bridegroom was 21.

PHOTO FROM VASA ILLUSTRATA. COURTESY VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

at the home of Carl Carlsson, which was located about half a mile northeast of the present Vasa Lutheran Church. There, on Monday forenoon, most of the settlers were gathered for divine worship, after which they organized the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Vasa. (The name Vasa was the royal family name of Gustaf I of Sweden, in whose reign the Lutheran Reformation took place in that country.) The membership of the congregation, including children, was eighty-seven.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Norelius' First Home at Vasa

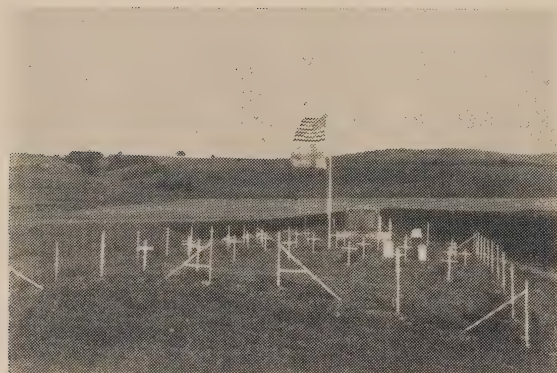
Hastening back to Red Wing in the afternoon, Norelius met with the people there in the evening as previously agreed, and organized the congregation now known as "First Lutheran Church of Red Wing." There were eighty-one charter members, fifty-four adults and twenty-seven children.

Norelius was not yet twenty-two years old. Perhaps he acted a bit hastily, in the general atmosphere of boom times and youthful eagerness to get things going at once. He himself wrote, years later: "It must be admitted, that materials for the establishment of a Christian congregation in these places were not, generally speaking, of the best kind, and the time came when I regretted what was done; but I believe, nevertheless, that God had His hand in these matters, and that it was a good thing that these congregations were organized with such material as was available. History shows that they have gradually been nurtured to become Christian congregations, and that God has honored the work carried on in these places."

When Norelius made his first visit to Goodhue County he was pastor of a parish at West Point and Attica, Indiana. His parishioners were not satisfied in that locality, and Norelius was trying to find a place for them in Minnesota. He became enthusiastic about the Vasa community, and although he did not get many of his Hoosier friends to move north, he himself accepted a call to the churches he had organized, and moved to Red Wing in May, 1856. His salary was to be \$200.00 annually from each church, to be paid half in cash and half in products.

Norelius decided to make his home at Vasa. He bought a claim of 160 acres for \$130.00. The previous owner had built a log cabin eight feet square, with a sod roof and the bare ground for floor. Norelius built a small board shanty as an addition to the cabin. In this humble home he and his wife lived, and here they entertained Dr. W. A. Passavant later that summer. In October some of the people from Indiana came, and twenty persons lived in the cabin for three weeks.

During the summer of 1856 a schoolhouse was built which also was used for the worship services for a time. Norelius preached there every other Sunday, as a rule. Soon the novelty of church services in the wilderness wore off, the people became rather negligent about attendance, and sometimes when the pastor was on his way to church he met his members going forth with an axe or a gun on the shoulder. Undismayed by pioneer laxity in religious affairs, Norelius set about



*"Grafbacken"
(Cemetery Hill).
Old graveyard near
White Rock, Good-
hue county. Used
1859 - 1881, then
neglected and "lost"
for nearly half a
century. Restored
and dedicated 1933.*

PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

to establish order and churchliness. Four congregational meetings were held the first year. Two of these were for the purpose of adopting a constitution. This became the main substance of the proposed congregational constitution adopted in 1857 by the Scandinavian Lutheran Conference (a part of the Synod of Northern Illinois, and forerunner of the Illinois Conference of the Augustana Synod.)

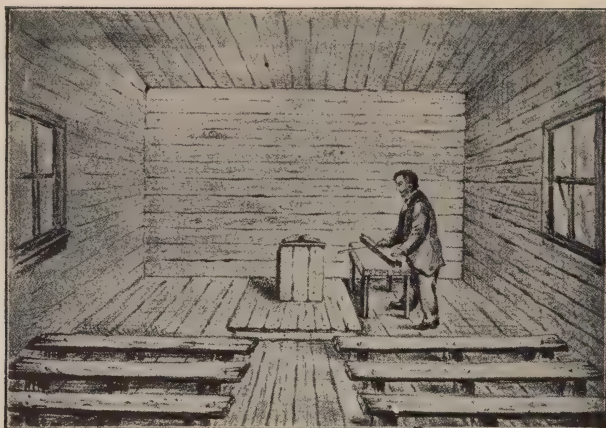
Many new settlers came to Vasa in 1856, some immigrants coming directly from Europe, some having lived for a time in Illinois. To ascertain just what prospects there were for the church, Norelius made a "house-to-house canvass" in the fall of 1856—undoubtedly the first one of its kind in the Minnesota Conference. A complete survey of the entire community, reported by Norelius at a congregational meeting on November 8, revealed the fact that there were 185 persons who desired to be members of the church, of whom 101 were communicants.

It is also indicative of the young pastor's zeal for orderliness that a church cemetery was dedicated on November 9, 1856, before there was any immediate need for a burial ground. A month later the first funeral took place. Mrs. Anders Monsson froze to death out on the prairie on December 13. This pioneer cemetery was about one-half mile south of the present church. It was used as a burying ground for some years. Another cemetery was located on a knoll two miles north of White Rock. The first burial at that place was in 1859 and the last in 1881. This place was known as Grafbacken. After the cemetery was later established in the Vasa church yard Grafbacken was forgotten. The story of its rediscovery and restoration has been told in an article in *Minnesota History*, Volume 14, December, 1933, pp. 426-428.

Christian day school for the children of the church was opened on November 15, 1856, the first term being ten weeks. Student J. Engberg, a cousin of Norelius, was the teacher. His salary was to be \$35.00 per month. This was to be raised by a fifty cent contribution from each member of the church between the ages of twenty-one and fifty-five. This "poll tax" was generally paid by bringing potatoes to the school house. It was winter and the potatoes were ruined by frost before they could be sold. Engberg's actual salary was very meager. The equipment of the school was also very limited. Nils Peterson took the job of furnishing benches and desk for \$9.50. The building itself cost \$28.00. It was a humble beginning, but it indicated a desire for Christian education, and the Vasa congregation has maintained this activity continuously since the pioneer days. The first confirmation class consisted of only two pupils, Anders and Maria Jonasson, son and daughter of Jonas Jonasson. Walking many miles from Cannon River to White Rock for instruction, they were confirmed by Norelius in the fall of 1856. The following year there were three. In later years classes were much larger, sometimes having as many as sixty pupils.

The year 1857 was a time of growth and development for the congregation, as a number of new settlers were arriving, some of whom were well grounded in their religious faith. However, there were some who had a preference for the Methodist church, and a congregation was organized at Vasa. Typical of the feeling between the different denominations is the little story of two neighbor women. The Lutheran woman took some pride in the fact that the Lutheran church was by far larger than the little Methodist meeting house. The Methodist woman replied, "Yes, but you'll see that our little David will slay your Goliath."

The financial depression beginning in August 1857, almost slew the whole community. Speculation had stirred the settlers into extending themselves too far financially. They borrowed money to pay the government for their land, and they borrowed to buy horses, cattle, and machinery. The bubble of speculation in Minnesota burst suddenly, and all who held notes and mortgages tried to collect. New settlers who had borrowed money were in danger of losing their land and everything they owned. It seemed for a time that Vasa was doomed, but by hard work and stringent sacrifice the people managed to live through these dark days. Spiritually it proved to be a valuable experience. As long as speculation was rife, people openly flouted the church



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Interior of Old Vasa Church. The man is Playing a Psalmodikon.

and the pastor, but the hardships sobered them somewhat, and they became more receptive to the Word of God.

The banking system was almost chaotic at that time and totally unable to cope with the financial difficulties. Restoration of order and confidence was very slow. Minnesota was further plagued financially by the "Five Million Dollar Loan" for railroad construction in 1858. The credit of the state was thereby impaired, and not a mile of railroad was built. Norelius was one of those who foresaw the iniquitous results of that state loan and did his best to urge the people to vote against it. But his efforts and the efforts of other conservative people were in vain.

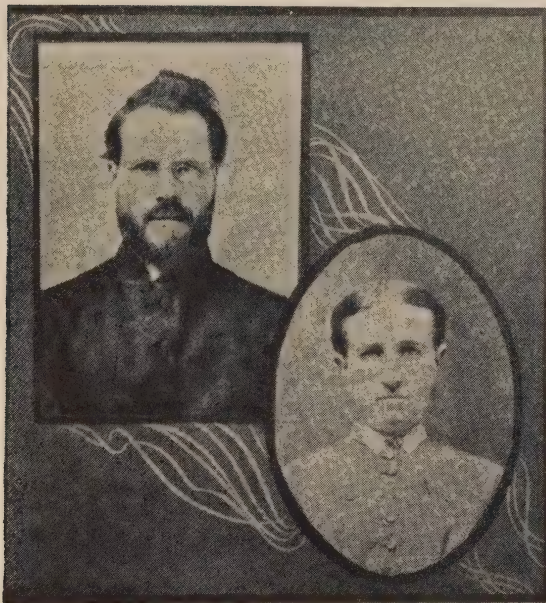
It was in the midst of these depressing and discouraging conditions, in 1858, that Norelius took a leading part in organizing the Minnesota Conference, as told in Chapter 1. Shortly after the Conference had been organized, Norelius left Minnesota. The decision seems rather abrupt, and various writers have attempted to assign reasons for his action. He had established himself in a way that seemed to foreshadow permanence. He had started a paper, *Minnesota Posten*, the first paper for the Swedish immigrants in this state. He had been active in getting the Conference organized. Now in September 1858 he received a call from the Chicago and Mississippi Conferences of the Synod of Northern Illinois to travel in the eastern states, to solicit funds in the older

Lutheran churches for the aid of Scandinavian students at the Lutheran institution in Springfield, Illinois. Accepting this call, he moved to Chicago in November. But as the depression was not abating, it was inadvisable to try solicitation of funds. Norelius was given another assignment. His paper, *Minnesota Posten*, was consolidated with *Hemlandet*, and Norelius was chosen to be editor. Suppositions have been expressed that the Scandinavian Lutheran church leaders in Illinois had a desire to remove Norelius from Minnesota, to forestall the possibility of a move for an independent synod. Norelius was looked upon as the man who might lead a separatistic movement. Other writers have supposed that the financial stringency in Vasa induced him to leave. Be these things as they may, it took only two years until Norelius was back in Minnesota, first as pastor in St. Paul and travelling missionary for the Augustana Synod from September 1860 to September 1861, and then he again accepted a call to Vasa and Red Wing.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Vasa Lutheran Church. Erected 1869, Still in Use.



*Rev. Eric Norelius
and wife in 1868.*

PHOTO FROM
VASA ILLUSTRATA, COURTESY
VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Before Norelius left Vasa in 1858 he had secured an assistant pastor, Johan Peter Carlsson Boren. He had come from Sweden in September 1858, and at the convention of the Northern Illinois Synod at Mendota, Illinois, September 10-14, he was granted a license to preach. Coming to Minnesota with Norelius after the convention he was soon busily engaged in the work of ministering to the scattered immigrants in the Goodhue region. As we have seen (Chapter 1) he was one of the organizers of the Minnesota Conference, and its first president. When Norelius moved to Illinois Boren remained in Vasa as acting pastor of the parish, continuing there until 1861. After Norelius returned to Vasa in the fall of 1861, Boren served for a few years as pastor of the congregation in Stockholm, Wisconsin. He died in 1865.

Vasa had almost more than its share of congregational strife before agreement could be reached as to a location for the church. The school-house erected in 1856 served as a place of worship until 1862. During these six years the congregation made many decisions about building a church, and at least a dozen different sites were considered. No agreement was ever reached, until after Norelius' return, in 1862.

When a committee had selected a site for a church—the site of the

present Vasa church—it was found that the owner, a Dr. Whitmore of Wabasha, would not sell unless he could sell the entire eighty acres, and his price was \$320.00, half cash and the balance in one year with ten per cent interest. The committee agreed to the terms, the land was purchased, and the congregation retained forty acres, selling the other forty. A church was built, forty by twenty-six feet in size. In this church the third annual convention of the Augustana Synod was held, June 26-July 1, 1862. It was the first synodical convention in Minnesota. The delegation numbered forty-five, and the Vasa people managed to find lodging for them all in their primitive homes. One visiting pastor, unaccustomed to pioneer conditions, was sleeping in an attic room, and was greatly chagrined when he raised himself up in bed during the night and bumped his head against a ham hanging from a rafter. The next day he asked for a different lodging place. The pioneers thought this was a great joke on the gentleman preacher. They rather thought it was wonderful that things had improved to the point where one could sit up in bed and get hit in the head by a ham.

In the years when Boren was pastor a group of members had wearied of the discussions about where to build the church. They formed a congregation of their own, started building a church and called Boren to be their pastor. He accepted the call and for a time preached on Sundays just a mile from where Norelius conducted services. After the Vasa church was built the group which had seceded returned to the congregation. The frame church was soon too small, and in 1865 plans were begun for a new brick structure. Several years elapsed before it was completed. It was dedicated in September 1870. The cost of the building was over \$31,000. It was undoubtedly the best church structure in the Conference, and was rated as one of the finest rural churches in the state at that time. It is now among the oldest churches in the Conference still in use, a well known landmark to all who have lived or visited in the community.

Norelius served as pastor of Vasa and Red Wing from 1862 to 1868. After a trip to Sweden in 1868 he returned to Vasa and was called for the third time. This term of service was from 1869 to 1879. In 1874 Norelius was elected president of the Synod, serving until 1881. During these years he generally had an assistant pastor in his parish. Among those who served in this capacity were S. F. Westerdahl, J. Magny, A. Anderson, and P. J. Swärd.

In 1875 the Vasa congregation had a membership of 697 communicants and 447 children.

HOTEL



CHAPTER 7.

Red Wing

When Eric Norelius climbed Barn Bluff for the first time, on the morning of September 1, 1855, he looked out upon a scene that betokened the end of an era and the transition to a new one. Somewhere on the top of that bluff Chief Red Wing himself was buried. Now the Sioux warriors and their families had given up the land of their fathers, being relentlessly pushed westward by the coming of the white men. The Indians had left the land in its wilderness state, content to live by hunting and fishing. Even Red Wing's village had seemed a part of the natural landscape, the teepees blending with the trees and the hills. With the coming of the white man, Red Wing was destined to become a city, with brick buildings, paved streets, electric lights, railroads, automobiles.

Norelius, standing on Barn Bluff in 1855, saw the first steps in this transition. The wilderness still lay all around, but the red man was gone. The white man was in a feverish excitement, buying land, selling land, building houses, a sawmill, a flour mill, even a university! Eight stores had been established and about a hundred houses had been built. Several hundred people were there already, and among these were many immigrants from the Lutheran lands of Europe. Norelius and Nils Hokansson from West Point, Indiana, had come to Minnesota to look for land, where they might settle and bring others of their friends and companions. As we have seen in the previous chapter, they decided to locate a few miles from Red Wing, in the "Mattson settlement" later named Vasa.

Norelius was concerned about the church and the spiritual welfare of the people. We have already mentioned the fact that he gathered the Lutherans of Red Wing for services on Saturday evening, again on Sunday morning, and organized a Lutheran congregation on Monday evening, September 3, 1855. There were fifty-four communicants and thirty children, seventeen families and a score or so of young, unmarried people, eighty-four persons in all. The majority of the charter members did not stay long in Red Wing but moved to other parts of the state. The leading layman at the time of organization and for many

Barn Bluff, Red Wing, as seen from across the Mississippi River.

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years after was Hokan Olsson, who with his wife and six children had arrived in America in 1854 and had come to Red Wing in the spring of 1855. When there was no pastor to conduct services, Olsson had charge of the meetings and read a sermon. At Christmas 1855 they had both matins and forenoon service. Then as they enjoyed their Christmas dinner together, they conversed about the affairs of the congregation.

Red Wing united with Vasa in calling Eric Norelius as pastor and he and his wife arrived on May 16, 1856. No well equipped parsonage stood ready to receive them. There seemed to be no house available in which they might stay even temporarily. There was a man in Red Wing by the name of John Nilsson, who was very hard of hearing and had developed a habit of talking inordinately loud. Now he shouted to Norelius, "I guess you will have to move into my hog house for a while." This was said with genuine good intentions. Nilsson had just built a little shack which was to be used for his pigs, but they had not yet moved in. However, a small room was found for the new pastor and his wife at the home of one of the members, and there they stayed for two weeks, after which they moved out to their farm at Vasa.

Of the fifty-four charter members who were present in the fall of 1855, only thirty-two remained in the spring of 1856 when Norelius took charge of the congregation. But soon the membership increased again to sixty-three. These figures indicate something of the flux and flow of the immigrant stream. The newcomers did not immediately

settle down and build permanent homes. This was particularly the case with those who came to the cities and villages. It was true to a large extent even of those who settled in rural areas. Again and again we find that immigrant farmers stayed on their first claim only three or four years, or perhaps up to fifteen years, then moved on to a new frontier, looking for a better place. In many instances "a better place" meant not better soil, but more fish and game, more elbow room, more congenial religious surroundings, and undoubtedly in some instances it was just the urge to go and see some other part of the country. Perhaps some had mortgaged their land and then found it easier to move to a new homestead than to pay old debts.

On Trinity Sunday, 1856, Eric Norelius preached for the first time as pastor in Red Wing. The meeting place was a half finished store building which later became a saloon. Though the surroundings were anything but churchly, the essentials of the church were there, in the preaching of the Word, and there was a desire on the part of many to hear it. At the very first meeting the congregation subscribed \$104.00 for a church and \$50.00 had been contributed prior to this. During the first weeks the meetings were generally held in private homes, but they were too small, and the congregation set to work immediately to erect a church. On June 1, the following decision was made: "The church shall be built of boards, set up and down. It shall be twenty-six feet



PHOTO COURTESY FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, RED WING

First church building erected by Lutherans at Red Wing, Built 1856.

wide, thirty feet long, and twelve feet high on the sides. It shall have three windows on each side, five panes high and three panes wide, each pane twelve by fourteen inches in size. The door shall be four feet, six inches wide and eight feet high." A lot was purchased from C. J. F. Smith for \$153.00, at Fifth and Franklin, one block from the present church; and there the church was built according to the specifications agreed upon. The outer walls and roof were completed before winter came, and in this condition the church was used until the fall of 1857. It was the first building erected by Swedish Lutherans in Minnesota specifically for church services. (The Chisago Lake congregation had erected a building earlier, and used it as a place for services, but it was specifically intended to be a schoolhouse.)

The original Red Wing church, though never finished, never painted, never dedicated, and one might add, never comfortable, it yet served its purpose for a time and has become a place of historical interest to the people of the Minnesota Conference and other Lutherans. It was not only the first church in this Conference, but also the first home of the Conference educational institution. Gustavus Adolphus College had its beginning as an academy in Red Wing, and the church was the school room in which one teacher and one pupil met in 1862. The same building was also the one in which German Lutheran pastors organized a synod in 1858 under the leadership of "Father" Heyer. And in that simple church Easter 1865 was observed as a solemn day of



Steamboat on the River

I left Red Wing on the evening of September 4 [1855] on the very poorest steamboat I have ever seen. Everything was in the greatest disorder, and the salon evidently had not been cleaned or swept for half a year. The worst of all was the crew; most of them were drunk and the captain worse than anyone else. He did not even know how far it was to Stillwater or to St. Paul or how much he should charge for passage. Each one had to guess at that. Everything went accordingly: Sometimes we were near to being burned up, at times we were about to be broken up on the sand bars, and I actually began to fear for our safety. . . . I met one respectable man, Mr. Marshall, the Republican candidate for Congress, a capable and modest man, as it seemed.

Eric Norelius, Letter published in *Hemlandet*, December 1, 1855.

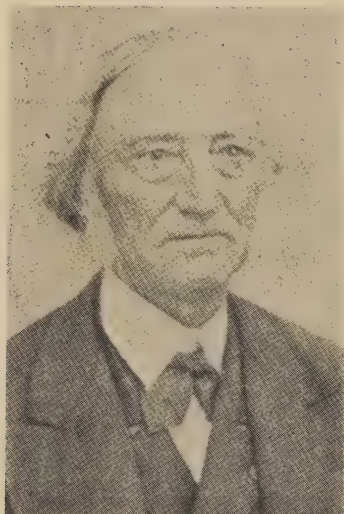
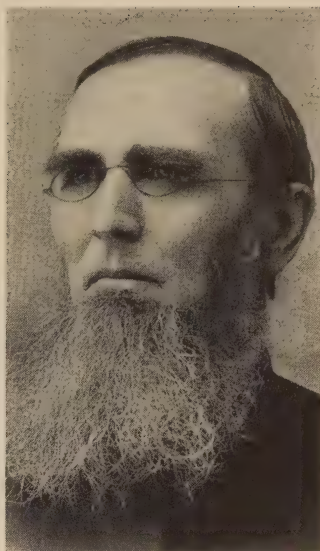


PHOTO COURTESY
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, RED WING

*Håkan Olsson,
Pioneer Layman in Red Wing.*



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. Peter Sjöblom

mourning. The people had just heard the news of the death of Abraham Lincoln.

A new church was built in 1866, and a few years later the original church was remodelled to serve as a parsonage and was used for this purpose until 1888. It was then sold for \$1,000.00. The new church was a brick building, thirty-six by sixty feet in size, erected at a total cost of \$8,000.00. It was at Fifth Street and West Avenue, on the same site as the present church but facing north instead of east. In 1895 the congregation decided to build a larger sanctuary, and erected a stone structure sixty by eighty feet in size, with an addition for school and other purposes. This church, which was dedicated by Norelius, is the one still in use.

When Norelius moved to Chicago in 1858, J. P. C. Boren became the pastor. Boren seems to have been rather tactless in some ways. In 1860 at a congregational meeting the church members were discussing how to pay their debt. They owed \$200.00 to the church extension fund of the General Council. Someone suggested that they rent the church pews to the highest bidders. Boren thought it was a good idea, and

urged it so strongly that it was adopted. This resulted in dissatisfaction among the members and antagonism towards Boren, and a few months later he was voted out. A new call was then extended to Norelius, and he served from 1861 to 1868, being pastor of the Vasa congregation also. In 1868 the parish was divided.

The Christian training of the children seems to have been a difficult problem in Red Wing during the first few years. Many parents thought their children needed no other education than that which they received in the public schools. The pastor found that pupils in the confirmation class could not read the Catechism, must less understand it. The Sunday schools of the "American" churches attracted some of the Lutheran children. Not until 1862 did the congregation take any definite steps towards the establishment of a Christian week day course of religious instruction. Then it appropriated twenty dollars for this purpose. This action by the Red Wing congregation helped to bring about the establishment of a Conference school, which later became Gustavus Adolphus College (Chapter 39).

Norelius resigned in December 1867. Though the congregation numbered only 171 communicants they felt able to support a pastor alone. Consequently the parish was divided, and Red Wing called Rev. Peter Sjöblom of Porter, Indiana. He had arrived from Sweden in 1866. Having received his education in his native land, he applied for ordination to the ministry in the Augustana Synod immediately after his arrival in America. He carried with him a certificate of recommendation from church leaders in Sweden, including Dr. Fjellstedt, showing that even as a student he had become widely and favorably known as a fervent evangelical preacher.

Sjöblom also had the reputation of being a staunch and able champion of the Lutheran doctrine. During his pastorate in Red Wing, 1869-1886, he frequently had opportunity to use his ability to defend the faith, particularly against the Baptist teachings and Waldenstromianism. In the work of the Conference and the Synod Sjöblom became one of the leaders soon after he came to Minnesota. He served as Conference president eight years, and as secretary of the Synod and vice president of the Synod a number of years. He was known as a most competent parliamentarian, thoroughly acquainted with the constitution and the rules of the Synod and the Conference.

The Red Wing congregation had a slow growth until after the Civil War period. In 1865 it had a membership of 121. Ten years later this



PHOTO COURTESY FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, RED WING

*This was the new church built in 1864 by the
Congregation in Red Wing.*

had increased to 459. Rev. Peter Sjöblom served as pastor in Red Wing for seventeen years. During these years Red Wing was a place where many new settlers stayed for a time until they decided on a permanent location. Sjöblom wrote more than a thousand transfers to other congregations, mostly to new parishes in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He was instrumental in organizing several new congregations in the Goodhue district (Chapter 30).

The Goodhue Region

Goodhue county became a strongly Lutheran region. From the first congregations, Vasa and Red Wing, the influence of the church spread to other near-by communities, particularly of course through the zeal of Pastor Norelius. Congregations were organized at Stockholm Wisconsin (1856), Cannon River (1857), and Spring Garden (1858), and other congregations later. We shall give a brief account of the beginning of settlement and the founding of the church in each of the places mentioned.

Stockholm, Wisconsin

On the Wisconsin side of Lake Pepin, which is a widening of the Mississippi River, there is a high promontory long known as Maiden Rock, so named because of an old Indian legend which tells of a girl who leaped from the rock to her death rather than marry a man whom she did not love. In 1852 an immigrant boy by the name of Erik Peterson was working on a log raft going down the Mississippi. A brief stop was made at this point, and Peterson had time to climb to the top of Maiden Rock. He was so pleased with the surrounding country that he soon returned and filed a claim near the river. He wrote to relatives and friends in Sweden urging them to come. Then he went to Sweden and got still others to emigrate. The first ones stayed in Moline, Illinois, until Peterson and the others with him arrived, and he led the group to the spot he had selected. There were some seventy persons who come. They named their colony Stockholm.

In June, 1856, a few weeks after Norelius had come to Vasa, he made a visit to Stockholm. Erik Peterson's wife had died and Norelius was the nearest Lutheran pastor. The funeral was held on June 19, and on the following day Norelius conducted a worship service, beginning with the baptism of seven children. Then followed communion, and after that, a congregation was organized. Norelius promised that he would serve them as often as he could until they obtained a pastor of their own.

Later the same year Norelius arranged to have Peter Beckman come



PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Maiden Rock, Wisconsin, from an old drawing illustrating the legend of the Indian maiden who leaped from the rock to her death rather than marry a man she did not love.

to Stockholm to be the teacher and preacher for the colonists. In 1857 Beckman was granted a license by the Synod of Northern Illinois and continued to serve as pastor until June, 1858. The leaders of that time in the Stockholm community were not of the type of religious piety characterized by the term "läsare" (readers). Beckman was a man of religious fervor and personal piety, and consequently did not suit the Stockholm group. When he resigned and left, the congregation advertised in a Swedish secular newspaper for a minister who was not a "läsare." The advertisement brought results. A preacher by the name of John Rosenberg came in July, 1858. He was of the free and easy kind, who had no scruples about liquor and worldly amusements. He stayed about two years. The people lost confidence in him. He gave up the ministry and tried his hand at medicine.

In the meantime J. P. C. Boren had made occasional visits at Stockholm and in 1861 he reorganized the congregation and received a call to serve as pastor. He did not move to Stockholm until 1864, but lived on his claim near Vasa and made a journey to Stockholm about once or twice a month. Having contracted tuberculosis he died in 1865.

The resulting vacancy at Stockholm was of several years' duration,

during which time the congregation suffered considerably from strife and dissension. A split occurred when some of the members withdrew and organized a congregation a few miles away and called it Sabylund. This was in 1868. For a number of years the two congregations existed side by side and constituted a parish. In 1887 the Stockholm congregation was dissolved, the remaining members joining the Sabylund group. This congregation has maintained its existence and is to be considered as a direct continuation of the original work begun under the leadership of Norelius at Stockholm in 1856.

Rev. J. Fremling served as pastor of Sabylund-Stockholm 1871-1882.

Cannon River

The village of Cannon Falls had its beginnings in the spring of 1856. Today the Minnesota Conference has a large congregation there. But this congregation was not organized until 1869. The original congregation in that neighborhood is the little rural Cannon River Church, organized by Eric Norelius in 1857.

The first Lutheran colonists in the community were from Norelius' former parish at West Point, Indiana. Others came about the same time, some directly from Sweden, some from various places in Minnesota and Iowa.

Nils Hokanson, who had accompanied Norelius on the first visit to Goodhue county in 1855, came in 1856 and took a claim at Cannon River. Carl J. Anderson came with him. Gustaf Anderson came from Indiana somewhat later. Others of the early settlers were Anders Swenson, Johan Peter, August Peter, and Carl Johnsson. These had first tried farming on land south of Cannon Falls but were dissatisfied and moved to the other side of the river and a few miles farther down the valley. Gustaf Westman and a few others came from Rushby in Chisago county. In 1857 a large contingent from Indiana came, mostly young people, stayed for a time at Cannon Falls, then went to Waseca county and established the Vista colony. The majority of the early Cannon River settlers had lived for a time in Indiana. Among the exceptions were J. Jonsson Engberg, A. P. Norelius and family, from Chisago Lake, Anders P. Johnson from Elgin, Illinois; P. O. Tilderquist and A. Lindstrom from Sweden.

Norelius visited the settlers and held services in their log cabins. At New Year's, 1857, he made a journey on foot from Vasa through deep snow and in severely cold weather. He was seriously frostbitten when he arrived, but after he had thawed out he held services. As yet

A typical log house of the Goodhue region. This one was built in the 1860's.

PHOTO COURTESY
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



there was no great spiritual hunger. Most of the men had a thirst for other kinds of spirits and had celebrated the holidays rather merrily.

In the spring a Lutheran congregation was organized with some twenty-five or thirty charter members. Norelius was eager to get a church built immediately. Securing promises of money and labor, he confidently made a trip to Hastings, seventeen miles away, ordered materials and had most of them hauled to Cannon Falls. Just then most of the settlers decided to move to Waseca county, and those who stayed did not want to proceed with the building project. Norelius himself had to borrow money at four per cent per month to pay for the lumber he had bought. The worst of it was that the pile of lumber was unguarded and one by one the boards disappeared, as the settlers found that they needed some lumber. The only thing Norelius ever received was a sack of flour given him by one honest settler as remuneration for what he had taken.

From 1858 to 1869 the little Cannon River congregation was together with Spring Garden as a parish, and served by Pastor P. Beckman. A church was built in 1862 under his leadership.

Though this congregation has remained rather small, it has continued its activity through the years, and can look back upon a history of more than ninety years. It has for many years been a part of the Welch parish.

Spring Garden

The name of this community indicates the reason why the first settlers chose to stay there. The soil was fertile, and there was an abundance of springs. To this place three immigrant families came in the

summer of 1855. They had arrived in America the previous year, and had spent the first winter in Illinois. These three families were Carl A. Haggstrom's, Magnus Edstrom's, and Johannes Wenberg's.

Arriving in Red Wing in April 1855 the men went out to look for land, the families staying in Red Wing. In the town of Leon the three land seekers found what they wanted, fairly level terrain, with good soil, good water, and sufficient woods for building material. They took claims and built a little cabin.

In October they were ready to bring their families to the new home. Edstrom had a yoke of oxen. When they had left all trails behind and set out into the wilderness, Mrs. Haggstrom asked, "How far do we keep on like this?" "Oh," joked Edstrom, "We'll keep on till we find some little cabin." And of course there was only one.

Other settlers came later that fall, and the little claim shanty was very crowded and uncomfortable through the winter. They had a long way to town. It was twenty miles to Red Wing, and to transport a barrel of flour was a real problem.

They managed to live through the winter, and the following year, 1856, their settlement grew rapidly, when two large groups came from different places. The one was Johannes Holm and his large family, seven grown sons and four married daughters. They came from Geneva, Illinois, having arrived there from Sweden in 1854. The other group came from Butler county, Iowa, having immigrated to the place in 1853. Not all of these remained permanently at Spring Garden. There were also a number of individual families who came about the same time, so that by the end of 1856 the settlement numbered almost a hundred persons.

It was in the spring of 1856 that Norelius moved to Vasa. But no one seemed to know that there was another Lutheran settlement just eight miles away. This shows that the new settlers were not only isolated but very much preoccupied with the important business of building homes and getting their farms under cultivation.

A new sequence in the drama begins on July 6, 1856. It was Sunday morning. Pastor Norelius was dressed for the worship service in the new schoolhouse which had just been built. Across the prairie from the south there came a yoke of oxen pulling a wagonload of people. They were strangers to Norelius. He soon discovered who they were: Pioneer families from the new settlement at Spring Garden. They had heard of Vasa, and having heard that a pastor had come, they deter-

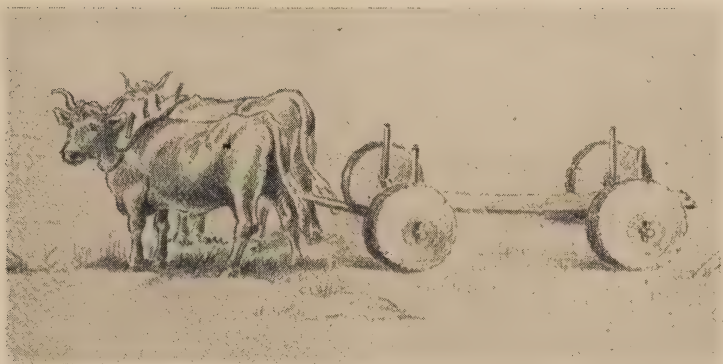


PHOTO FROM VASA ILLUSTRATA, COURTESY VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

*"Skrikkärran," or "Squeak Cart," a home made wooden oxcart,
Run without Grease, and Famous for its Loud Creaking.*

mined to find the place. Now after driving with their oxen over hill and dale and many a roundabout way among trees and brush, at last they had arrived. There were two children to be baptized. The Edstrom's had one and the Wenberg's had one. Having brought their children to baptism and having attended the Sunday worship they pleaded with the pastor to come and visit their settlement, and then returned to their home in the woods satisfied that the wilderness was beginning to blossom as a rose.

On July 17 Norelius went to visit Spring Garden and then continued to visit the place more or less regularly as time and circumstances would permit. No congregation was organized until two years later. Preliminary steps were taken during this time, and in the summer of 1858 Pastor Peter Beckman was assigned to this place. Under his leadership a congregation was organized. Beckman and his wife had arrived in Red Wing in the fall of 1856. They moved to Stockholm, Wisconsin, and he served the congregation there about a year and a half. Then he was called to Spring Garden and Cannon River. Services were held here and there in the settlers' cabins. The Spring Garden congregation was organized on July 19, 1858, and during the summer they built a log cabin parsonage, fourteen by twenty feet in size, which also served as a meeting place for the congregation for some time.

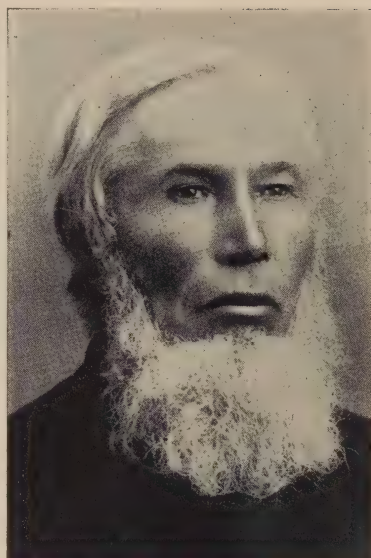
Pioneer poverty became the lot of the new pastor. Although the congregation gained somewhat in membership it still remained small

and the settlers had little to contribute to the support of their pastor. In these times of financial stringency Norelius proved to be a friend in need. Being acquainted with some of the Lutherans in the eastern states he wrote letters appealing for aid, and Beckman said of him, "Norelius was a good beggar when it concerned others; not so good when it concerned himself."

At the meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois in Chicago in the fall of 1859 Beckman was ordained to the ministry, and after receiving kind words of encouragement and advice from brother pastors returned to his parish at Spring Garden where he continued to serve for ten years. In 1862 a little church was built, and from that time the congregation increased in numbers and in attendance at the worship. Stewardship was, however, not well understood in the early days. The pastor's salary was seldom paid in full nor with any regularity. The first settlers, when their economic conditions improved, refused nevertheless to contribute any more than others who had just begun farming in the settlement.

The church which was erected in 1862 served its purpose until 1876, when the present church was built. It has been improved and remodelled at various times.

Peter Beckman was one of the organizers of the Minnesota Conference. This was shortly after he had come to Spring Garden, while he was only a licensed preacher, not yet ordained. His entire ministry, from 1856 to 1902 was given to the Minnesota Conference. As a pioneer home missionary he travelled much and organized a number of congregations in the central and western parts of the state. This part of the story is found in later chapters.



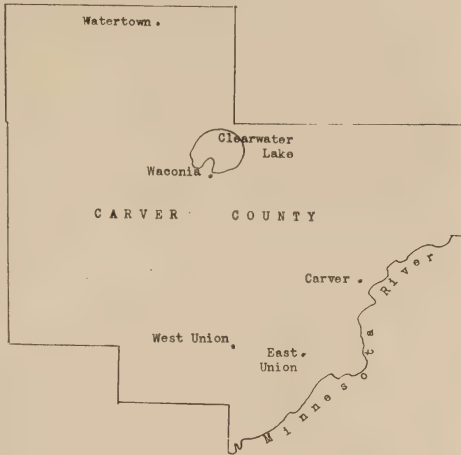
COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

*Rev. Peter Beckman, one of the
Founders of the Minnesota
Conference.*

CHAPTER 9.

The Union Settlement

The Minnesota River has had a significant place in the history of this state. Explorers sought its upper reaches in the seventeenth century. It became a highway for fur traders and for Indian missionaries. At the junction of the Minnesota and the Mississippi Fort Snelling was established in 1819. Artists came to paint the scenery in the valley. On the banks of the Minnesota River the Sioux Indians met with the white men in 1851 and concluded treaties which ceded practically all of southern Minnesota to the United States government. Prior to that time no white men lived in that area



except for traders and missionaries. As soon as the "Suland" was open for settlement a multitude of people flocked in, and a string of towns were conjured into being almost over night along the Minnesota River and elsewhere in that area. One of these new villages was Carver, in Carver county, named after Jonathan Carver, the second explorer to ascend the Minnesota River.

To this community many of the immigrants from northern Europe directed their footsteps, beginning in 1854, or possibly 1853. The word "footsteps" may here be taken literally, for there were those who walked all the way from St. Paul to Carver, a distance of almost forty miles.

An interesting description of a journey to Carver in 1855 has been given us by Trued Granville Pearson in a book written by himself, later edited by Arvid Bjerking and published in Sweden in 1937 under the title "En Skånsk Banbrytare i Amerika" (A Scanian Trail

Blazer in America.) Pearson came to the United States in 1851 and worked in Illinois a few years. In the fall of 1855 he and his wife went to Minnesota. They boarded a river boat at Burlington, Iowa, paying \$40.00 for a cabin passage to St. Paul. The fare included meals for the ten day journey. Pearson tells the story of the journey in these graphic words:

"Soon both the lower and the upper decks were so crowded with passengers that they lay on the floor, on tables, and on chairs, and still there were many who had no room to lie down anywhere. We had two beds in our cabin but no one was allowed to crowd us. However, Hannah took pity on two Swedish girls and let them in to occupy one of our beds.

"The water was high, and as there was no railroad west of Burlington at that time, the traffic on the river was very lively, all sorts of boats going to and from Minnesota, loaded so heavily that it seemed strange they did not sink.

"After ten days we came to St. Paul. This place was not much to see at that time. We found lodging with Anna B. who had a hotel there. There I left Hannah, and in company with an acquaintance I walked from St. Paul to a place about fifteen miles out in the country from Carver. There in the midst of the thick forest was a lovely little lake, around which some Swedes had settled and built their little log cabins. We were acquainted with a few of these from Knoxville. Their letters had prompted in me a desire to settle at this lake.

"It was far from St. Paul to Carver. We set out one beautiful autumn day, came to Fort Snelling where I saw regular soldiers for the first time in this country and passed Minneapolis which at that time was a barren sand prairie with a few new houses. On the other side of the river lay St. Anthony, which already had the appearance of a little city.

"Fortunately there was a sort of road used by new settlers, and we were told that we could follow the road all the way to Carver. With light and cheerful hearts we marched along westward. Sometimes we saw no human habitation for hours at a time, but as yet the land was for the most part open prairie with here and there a small grove of hardwood trees and brush, along clear streams which we sometimes had difficulty to cross dryshod.

"In the afternoon we saw no houses. Twilight came, and we began to wonder if we would have to sleep out under the open sky. Then at last we saw at a distance a new, fairly large log house. We went there

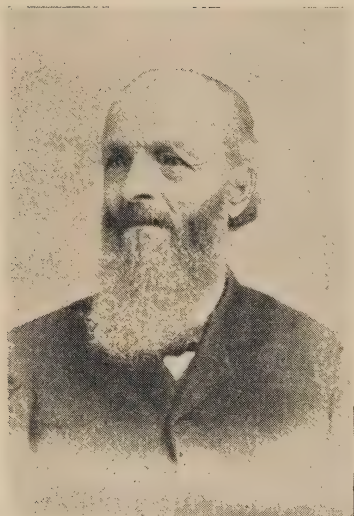


PHOTO FROM VASA ILLUSTRATA.
COURTESY VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Trued Granville Pearson



PHOTO COURTESY
EAST UNION LUTHERAN CHURCH

A. Hult, East Union Pioneer

and found no one but a tall, dark complexioned old woman who hardly understood us, nor we her, but nevertheless she willingly granted us to stay over night, and immediately she began to get supper for us."

Here follows in Pearson's narrative an account of how the two sons of the woman came home later in the evening. After the two travellers had been assigned to their lodging in the attic they overheard the family downstairs talking and the words "Kill them both" entered into the conversation. In the dim light of dawn the next day they saw the mother come up to the loft with a sharp knife in her hand. Quietly she sliced some pieces from a ham hanging up there; coming down from the loft in the morning Pearson and his companion found that the two marked for killing were two roosters. (Undoubtedly this episode is apocryphal.)

The travellers reached Carver that afternoon. They stayed at a hotel which burned early the next morning. After this bit of excitement they resumed their journey to the lake where their Knoxville friends lived. The new settlement consisted of four or five log cabins. The settlers had supplied themselves well with game and fish. Flour was scarce and very expensive. Clearing of land had been begun but no fields were

yet ready. Potatoes and other vegetables had been planted among the hazel bushes and had yielded quite well.

Pearson and his companion took claims and then returned to St. Paul, but there they met Hans Mattson and he persuaded them to go to Vasa. Pearson became one of the leading members of the Vasa colony. His son, Dr. W. A. Granville, became well known as president of Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania.

The community settled by Knoxville people came to be known as Scandia. It was near the present village of Waconia. It was visited a few times by Lutheran pastors and a congregation was organized there a few years later. But the Lutheran settlers decided to move and the congregation vanished.

Another settlement had been begun near Carver about the same time. Nils Alexanderson was the first settler, coming to this place either in the fall of 1853 or the spring of 1854. Johannes Hult came in April, 1854, and he found Alexanderson there at that time. Two brothers of Hult, Anders and Peter Hult, came the same year, and also Swen Gud-

1 1 1

Pioneering at Carver

"I bought 80 acres of land from a Swede, 36 miles above St. Paul, in Carver County. Afterwards I have claimed 80 acres, so that I have 160 acres, in case I am able to pay the Government. One end of my land adjoins the state road, the other end approaches St. Peter's River, 5 miles from the town of Carver. Here I have built a house to live in. But I have not been able to do any work myself; I have had the ague . . . Nor has there been any chance to earn anything except by cutting cord wood. . . . A church is going to be built here, next summer. . . . We are about 50 families, Swedes and Norwegians, who live in this settlement. But we have no minister so it is really a sad case. . . . Victuals are dear here: a barrel of wheat flour 12 dollars, a pound of pork 16 cents, potatoes 50 cents a bushel. If any letter should have arrived from Sweden, would the Pastor kindly send it to me. . . .
. . . Cordially, Carl Alm.

My address is: Charles Alm, Swede, Carver, Carver County, Minnesota River, Minnesota Territory."

Letter written December 26, 1855 from Carver County, Minnesota. Published in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America*, 1923-1924, P. 92-93.

This log house was the original home of Former Justice Andrew A. Holt. It was built by his father, Johannes Hult, at East Union in 1855.

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EAST UNION
LUTHERAN CHURCH



mundson, Jonas Carlson, and Anders Stomberg. They all settled in the neighborhood of where the East Union Church is now. They called it at first, "Oscars settlement." Four years later the name was changed to the Union settlement. The settlers here included immigrants from both Sweden and Norway. Among the latter were Per Kleven and Ola Paulson. Paulson was one of the laymen present at the organization of the Minnesota Conference, and was the first Conference treasurer. He later became an ordained pastor in the Augustana Synod, but withdrew together with his Norwegian brethren in 1870.

The first settlers wrote to relatives and friends urging them to come. As a result the community grew rapidly. No congregation was organized until in 1858. Occasional visits were made by pastors of the Synod of Northern Illinois, but in the meantime the community became an open field for other religious practitioners. One Daniel Brown spent some time there in 1856 and 1857. He preached to those who were willing to listen, but the people became disgusted with his careless manner of life.

P. A. Cederstam was the first Lutheran pastor to visit Carver County. On a missionary journey from his home at Chisago Lake he came to the "Oscar settlement" in the latter part of July 1855. He baptized several children, among them being a son of Mr. and Mrs. Johannes Hult. The name given this little child was Andrew; in later years he has become well known as Justice Andrew Holt of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Cederstam visited the settlement again in October 1855. No record

has been found of any visits in 1856, but in 1857 he was there in November, and on November 15 he confirmed a class of fourteen young people who had received a part of their instruction from Brown.

L. P. Esbjörn on a journey to Minnesota in 1856 paid a visit to Carver county, and T. N. Hasselquist also went there at least once. Eric Norelius' first visit was in May, 1857. He was then pastor in Vasa.

Norelius describes his visit in these words: "In May, 1857, I came to this new settlement for the first time. As yet there was no road laid out between Carver and East Union, nor was there any particular need of one, for very few people had any horses or oxen wherewith they could or needed to make any journey to the village. As I was walking out into the country to find the settlers I first met C. A. Hedengran and had a long talk with him. He had then gone through a difficult spiritual struggle and had found some measure of peace, but he was living in fear lest this peace should be lost and his behavior at the time seemed rather strange to me. Then I met the lively young man Ola Paulson who was full of ambition and politics, but as yet a stranger to the Lord. However, there was something in his straightforward and honest character which prophesied of better things to come. A political election was soon to take place and he was out electioneering.

"I found my way to Johannes Hult who had been mentioned to me as the one who could best inform me regarding the religious and spiritual needs of the community and who was most concerned about the church. Here I stayed a few days, remaining with them over Pentecost, had several services, baptized some children, and celebrated holy communion. The people were then engaged in building their first church, a log house thirty by thirty-six feet in size and fourteen feet high. The roof was ready on one side only, but we met there once for a worship service. The carpenter's bench served as altar and pulpit, and there several children were baptized. On Pentecost we had services and communion at Swen Gudmundson's place near the church. After the close of the service we had an unpleasant affair with Mr. Brown, who still up this time had acted as pastor of the group. The people had become utterly tired of him and now they wanted to get rid of him. Without any suggestion on my part I was made to serve as a sort of unwilling judge in the case, and they brought one accusation after the other against Mr. Brown. In an unreasoning outburst of rage he tried to defend himself; but surrounded by practically the entire group he became the target for one attack after the other, and at last he had to

The main part of this house, on the left, was built 1855 by A. Anderson. Norelius preached there Whitsunday 1857.

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EAST UNION
LUTHERAN CHURCH



give in. Even some who loved the bottle just as much as he said, 'It is bad enough that we drink, but it is terrible when the minister drinks like a hog.' I could of course do nothing but to admonish the people that they should have nothing to do with Brown, and that as soon as a congregation would be organized they should under no conditions allow irresponsible persons to appear and conduct services. Here as in some other places it was the great spiritual need which opened the doors for such adventurers; but soon the people began to wake up to these conditions and to be on the watch. It was not long after this until Mr. Brown left the community to try his fortune in other places.

"At this time there were 160 claim holders in the settlement. The number of Swedes was about 400, counting children and all; in July of the same year another 100 came, so that by the end of the year the Swedish population was over 500. The Norwegians numbered about 150 and the Danes nine."

When the settlers took up claims it so happened that one forty acre tract had been left. As time went on the people agreed that it would be a suitable place for the church and the parsonage. But there was as yet no congregation, and therefore no organized group to buy it. They agreed that one of the farmers living next to that forty should buy it and be permitted to use it for the time being. He took possession of it, but then he sold another forty of his own land, and when the congregation wanted the land, he was unwilling to give a deed. At last the

pressure became strong and he agreed to sell three acres for church and parsonage.

We thus have in this settlement the unique situation that a church was being built before a congregation was organized. No pastor was available to take charge of the work. In the midst of these uncertainties and while there still was much spiritual unrest among the people, due to the attempts of Baptists and Methodists, and fly-by-night preachers such as Brown to get a foothold, the man appeared who was destined to become the leader not only in Carver county but in wide areas of the home mission field. His name was Peter Carlson.

When Carlson came for the first time, in the fall of 1857, he came not with the intention of staying or to serve as pastor. He was a colporteur for the American Tract Society and the American Bible Society of New York. Coming up from Iowa into Minnesota he reached Carver county and went from house to house to sell Bibles and books. He also conducted informal services in the homes, and the people came eagerly to hear him. After a short visit to St. Paul and Scandia Carlson returned to Carver and stayed over Christmas. On Christmas Eve he received a letter from Norelius containing also a letter of recommendation from the Conference meeting held in Rockford, Illinois, some weeks earlier, urging Carlson to stay in the Carver settlement and attend to the religious needs of the people. Norelius also urged him personally to do this and offered to help him get a preaching license from the Synod of Northern Illinois. The people in Carver pleaded with him urgently to stay, and now, though they had as yet no organized congregation, and no elected officials, they nevertheless as a group of baptized Christians confessing the Lutheran faith issued a call to Peter Carlson to become their pastor.

Before he left Carver in January 1858 for Chicago, a spiritual awakening had begun to stir among the people. Instead of selfish strife over claims, a desire for the Word of God now became evident. Rev. Carlson was one who could talk to men individually about their spiritual life. While Carlson spent a few months with Rev. Erland Carlsson to get a little practical training for the ministry, the work in Carver was under the leadership of C. A. Hedengran and Ola Paulson, both of whom now had come to clarity in their spiritual life, and who freely witnessed of the Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Returning to the settlement in the spring Carlson led the people in the organizing of a congregation on June 8, 1858. It was to be a Scan-

Engine "Shakopee," first railroad engine to enter Chaska and Carver, on the Minnesota Valley Railroad, about 1868. Peter Carlson, Andrew Jackson, and the students of St. Ansgar's Academy undoubtedly had some rides on this train.



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dinavian Lutheran congregation. Peter Carlson was chairman of the meeting. C. A. Hedengran was secretary. Those who desired to be members of the congregation must promise that in sincerity of heart they would faithfully abide by the confession which they made at the Lord's altar in their fatherland, thus confessing that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, the only sufficient and infallible norm and standard for faith and life, and that the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism are a short but true summary of the main doctrines of Christianity.

In deference to the Norwegians it was agreed that their song books should be used at some of the services. The first deacons were C. A. Hedengran, Hans Paulson, Ola Paulson, Sven Jonsson, Johan Hellstrom, and Anders Stomberg. To guard against preachers of the sort they had already seen it was voted that "no one, either minister or layman shall have the right to preach or to conduct any kind of meeting here in the church unless he is known as one who holds to and confesses the true Evangelical Lutheran doctrine, and can show to the pastor or the deacons license or recommendation from someone in the Lutheran ministry."

After they had voted to change the name of the settlement from "Oscar" to "Union" they solemnly resolved "that anyone who permits his dogs to come into the church shall be fined twenty-five cents, to be paid to the congregation."

At a second business meeting on June 18 a constitution was adopted, and Peter Carlson was called as pastor for one year, beginning May 27,

1858, the salary to be \$3.00 for each land owner and each head of a household belonging to the congregation. Later he was given a permanent call and served the Union parish many years.

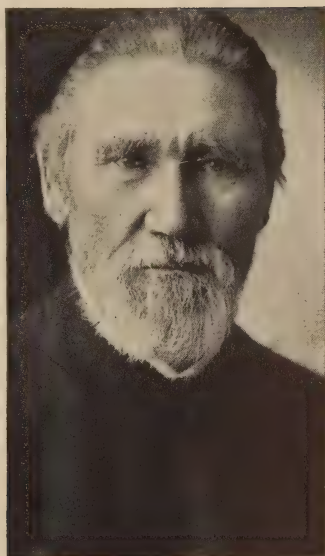
The third meeting was held July 4, 1858, to decide about a school for the Christian training of the children in the congregation. A former schoolmaster, Lars Anderson, was engaged as teacher for a term of two months with a salary of eight dollars per month and free board. A subscription list was started to pay his salary, headed with this injunction: "No one who feels the slightest interest in the furtherance of religion among the growing generation should let his name be missing from this list."

The spiritual revival which began at the time of Carlsson's first visit had slackened somewhat during his absence in Chicago. Upon his return to the community as their pastor there was renewed evidence of the power of the Word of God on the hearts and lives of the people. Almost every family in the congregation was affected more or less. However, this did not obviate religious strife. Some of the immigrants, particularly those from Norway, did not feel quite at home in the religious atmosphere which surrounded them, and some of the people of that group had never joined the church. Now it happened that some Lutheran pastors visiting the community were not altogether in theological harmony with Peter Carlson and the Union congregation, and therefore they were not permitted to speak in the church. This led to disputes and in the summer of 1858, shortly after the congregation was established, a minor split occurred. Four families organized a new congregation. This did not have a long existence.

The Union congregation was one of the strongest of the thirteen original congregations when the Lutheran Minnesota Conference was organized. The pastor, Peter Carlson, was one of the founders of the Conference. Ola Paulson went with him to the meeting and was accepted as a delegate although the congregation had not taken formal action to send a lay delegate. As already mentioned he was elected treasurer of the Conference and had the responsibility of taking care of \$5.09, the first offering for the Conference treasury.

During the fall a division of the Union congregation took place on geographical lines. Some of the settlers had many miles to church. It was agreed that a meeting house should be built in the western part of the settlement, about eight miles from the church. C. A. Hedengran undertook to build it, with some of the materials and labor to be

Rev. Peter Carlson, one of the Founders of the Minnesota Conference.



East Union Church Built 1866 and Still in Use.

COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN



PHOTO COURTESY EAST UNION LUTHERAN CHURCH

furnished by the people. The building was twenty-two by thirty-two feet in size and twelve feet high. It was partitioned off into two rooms. One was to be the chapel, and in the other room Hedengran and his wife had their home.

The first steps towards the organizing of a new congregation were taken on August 13, 1858. At a meeting on December 28 it was decided that the new congregation should be called West Union. There were forty-six charter members. Hedengran served as lay preacher for this group from its beginning until he moved to Chisago Lake in the fall of 1859. Peter Carlson served as pastor of East Union and West Union until 1869, when the parish was divided. He served East Union alone for another eleven years, after which he went out as the Augustana Synod's pioneer home missionary on the west coast, organizing a number of churches in that area.

East Union has the distinction of having been the home of the Conference school, St. Ansgar's Academy, for a period of twelve years, 1863-1875. This will be touched on more fully in the chapter on the beginnings of Gustavus Adolphus College. The fact that the East Union people not only expressed a desire to have the school located in their community, but also gave a great deal of material assistance to the school indicates a genuine interest in the church at large, especially the training of pastors and teachers for the church. During those twelve years the two Union congregations undoubtedly did as much for the school as all the rest of the Conference put together. But it was found that a rural setting, miles from a railroad, was not conducive to the growth and development of a college.

The original log cabin church was sold to the Conference in 1864 to be used as a school building. A new brick church was erected in 1866, which still serves as this congregation's house of worship, one of the landmarks of the Conference. After the Conference school had been moved to St. Peter the congregation purchased the school property, renovated the old building to be used as a parish house, called "St. Ansgar's Hall." It is still in use by the congregation, and is probably the only pioneer building in the Conference dating back to pre-Civil War times.

During Carlson's pastorate in Carver county he made missionary journeys to a number of places, including Minneapolis. This phase of his work will be dealt with in later chapters.

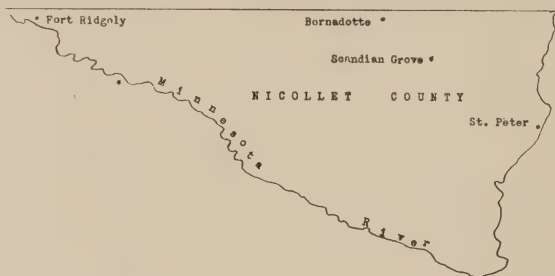
When St. Ansgar's Academy was established in East Union Rev. Andrew Jackson was elected president. He also became Peter Carlson's assistant in the East and West Union parish. The two pastors preached alternately in the two churches. In 1869 Jackson was called as regular pastor of the West Union church and served until 1889, except for a

short period in 1875 when he was granted a leave of absence. A pastor recently come from Sweden, A. G. Linden, had charge of the congregation during Jackson's leave. He was instrumental in causing a rift in the congregation. He and some of the members withdrew and organized the Gotha congregation. This group affiliated with the Ansgarius Synod, one of the synods which later merged to form the Mission Covenant. Linden was suspended from the ministry in the Augustana Synod, but was later received and served acceptably in other parishes in Minnesota. The Gotha congregation was dissolved, most of the members moving out to other settlements.

CHAPTER 10.

St. Peter

Minnesota got its name from the Minnesota River. This river was long known as the St. Pierre or St. Peter's River, so named by Sieur Pierre Charles Le Sueur, the first explorer of the valley, who in 1700 reached the point where Mankato now is situated. Jonathan Carver who came sixty-six years later made mention of the river in these words: "Ten miles below the Falls of St.



Anthony the river St. Pierre, called by the natives Wadapaw Menesotor, falls into the Mississippi from the west."

At first glance we may hardly recognize "Menesotor." This Indian name went through many changes in spelling before Congress finally decided on "Minnesota" when the territory was organized in 1849. Three years later, at the request of the Territorial Legislature, Congress officially declared that the St. Peter's River should be called the Minnesota River. It is the largest river lying wholly in Minnesota. The meaning of the Sioux word "Minnesota" is "sky tinted water."

At the mouth of the river the American Fur Company established a central trading post in 1834, under Henry H. Sibley. There he built a stone house in 1835 which is still standing, now a pioneer museum. Around the trading post a little settlement and village grew up, which was sometimes called St. Peter's, after the river, but also became known as Mendota. Until 1836 his address at this place was St. Peter's, Michigan Territory; from 1836 to 1838, St. Peter's, Wisconsin Territory; from 1838 to 1849, St. Peter's, Iowa Territory; then Minnesota Territory was organized, March 3, 1849. In 1858 Minnesota became a state.

The old village of St. Peter's became Mendota, but soon another St. Peter came into existence farther up the Minnesota River, near a spot

long known to the pioneer traders as Traverse des Sioux. It was about seventy miles up the river, near the western edge of the Big Woods. Here the Indians and the traders crossed the Minnesota River on their journeys from northwest to southeast. Here old trails met. Here large bands of Indians often encamped. It was a most natural place for a trading post and one was established there about 1825 by the American Fur Company, with Louis Provencalle as trader. It was also a natural place for an Indian mission and the Presbyterian missionary, Rev. Stephen R. Riggs opened a station there in 1842.

Until 1851 the Sioux Indians had control of the lands west of the Mississippi from the Iowa border up to a diagonal, somewhat irregular boundary line from Sauk Rapids to Breckenridge. White men had seen large areas of this land and had recognized its value. Prospective settlers were eagerly awaiting the day when they could enter the Sui land, build their homes, and put their plows into the black, fertile soil.

On July 23, 1851, a delegation from the United States government met with the upper tribes of Sioux Indians at Traverse des Sioux and there concluded a treaty by which the Indian lands were ceded except for a small reservation. Two weeks later a similar treaty was made with the lower Sioux tribes at Mendota. By these two treaties millions of fertile acres, the greater portion of the good farm land of Minnesota was opened for settlement. And the settlers were not slow in taking advantage of the opportunity. Before the land had been surveyed and even before the treaties were officially approved by Congress squatters were flocking into the newly acquired regions, trying to get the choice locations. In the next few years scores of towns were begun in the Minnesota valley, and thousands of settlers took up claims.

In 1853 William B. Dodd took a claim near Traverse des Sioux. On February 1, 1854, a company was organized by Dodd, Oliver Ames, William Ames, and others, with Governor Willis Gorman as president. They bought 336 acres of land and in June 1854 they platted a city on the left bank of the Minnesota River, a mile or two above Traverse des Sioux. They named it St. Peter. These were boom times in Minnesota, and the St. Peter Company did its best to build up a big city. In 1857 efforts were made to get the capital of Minnesota moved from St. Paul to St. Peter. A bill was passed in the legislature to accomplish this, but before the bill reached the governor for his signature it was surreptitiously taken away and hidden for several days until the session

ended. The governor signed another copy but that was declared invalid.

St. Peter was not destined to become the state capital, nor did it become a great metropolis as its founders hoped. But for the Lutheran Minnesota Conference St. Peter has become a place of great significance. There the Conference established its college in 1875.

The first Scandinavian Lutheran immigrants to settle in and around St. Peter came in 1855. They were generally poor when they came, as was usually the case with settlers arriving from Europe. But even in their poverty the early Lutheran pioneers at St. Peter were taking some definite action with regard to their religious needs. The leader among them in this respect was P. J. Ahlstrom. A Methodist minister, Tidlund, visited them but had no success. In the meantime the settlers were preparing to organize a Lutheran congregation without pastoral leadership. At a meeting called by Ahlstrom on October 5, 1856, they discussed the matter of organizing a congregation. A subscription list was started, and each one who contributed at least ten dollars for the proposed church would be considered a member. A year later, November 28, 1857, the congregation was organized. The doctrinal basis for the congregation was the Augsburg Confession, but with Article 14 omitted. (This Article reads: "Of Ecclesiastical Order, they teach, that no one should publicly teach in the church or administer the sacraments.



A Country for Blackbirds

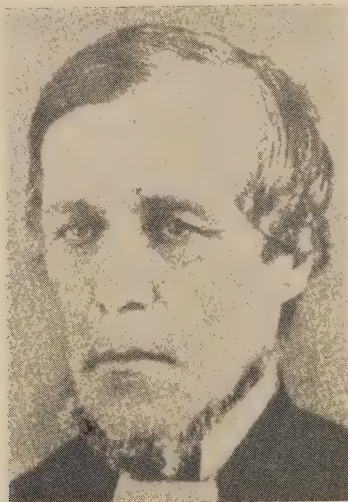
"Last month I traveled for three weeks on foot about five hundred miles in Minnesota in search of a place to settle. . . . I do not believe that those who direct their course to Forest City and thence west or northwest are duped. The land was the best I have seen unclaimed, and I intend to go there as soon as possible. There is room for hundreds, yes, thousands of families. I would like to say to those who have been lured to the St. Peter region that they have been fooled, because the land west of St. Peter and almost half the distance to Forest City is not fit for raising anything but blackbirds, not even for cranberries, for even they might drown. More than half of the land was under water in the middle of May."

Letter written from Minneiska, Minnesota, published in *Hemlandet* June 8, 1859, reprinted with translation in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America* 1922-1923, P. 105.



PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*St. Peter in 1868.
North Minnesota Avenue.*



Rev. John Pehrson

PHOTO COURTESY BERNADOTTE LUTHERAN CHURCH

unless he be regularly called.") The elimination of the article evidently indicated some misgivings with regard to the possibility that the ministry might become a hierarchy.

In the constitution adopted by the group at that time it was also

stipulated that: "The members of the congregation reserve the right to choose a pastor by free exercise of their vote and to issue a call through the trustees of the church to the one thus chosen, with provision as to remuneration and term of service; but if the pastor does not teach and live according to God's holy Word, the congregation reserves the right to dismiss the pastor upon proof of the charge against him."

This original constitution was discarded the following year, and the proposed constitution recommended by the Joint Chicago and Mississippi Conference was adopted, thus bringing the St. Peter congregation into uniformity with the other churches of the Minnesota Conference. The charter members of the St. Peter church numbered twenty-one.

Prior to the organization of the church Rev. T. N. Hasselquist of Illinois had visited St. Peter in the summer of 1857, when he made a missionary journey to the several Lutheran colonies in Minnesota. In the latter part of October and the first days of November, the same year, P. A. Cederstam of Chisago Lake paid a visit to St. Peter, conducted services and baptized several children. His visit also had the significant result that the St. Peter congregation together with the

1 1 1

The Washerwoman's Son

"This noble-hearted and noble-doing Swedish-American (John Albert Johnson) was born in a frontier cabin near the little village of St. Peter, on the 28th of July, 1861, son of Gustav and Caroline (Haden) Johnson. His father was of a good Swedish family and inherited considerable wealth, but appears to have squandered his inheritance, and at the age of thirty-three to have been assisted by his relatives to the northwest of the United States to begin life anew. He located at St. Peter, married, and for some time steadily followed his trade as a blacksmith; but his old habits again mastered him and his wastefulness, not to call it by a worse name, would have plunged the family into dire poverty, had it not been for the brave drudgery of the mother and the helpfulness of the sons. At his death the unfortunate father left four sons and a daughter, of whom John A. was the second to be born. It is characteristic of the late governor that when these painful circumstances of his boyhood were brought into his first gubernatorial campaign, he refused to deny the parentage of a drunken father and 'mother who took in washing.'"

A. E. Strand, *Swedish Americans of Minnesota*, P. 90.

near-by Scandian Grove congregation, issued him a call to become their pastor. The call was issued January 1, 1858. In May he moved from Chisago Lake to Scandian Grove, and served as pastor of the two congregations in Nicollet County until August, 1862, when the Sioux outbreak brought havoc to that region and caused many to leave. Cederstam moved to Illinois and the parish was left without a pastor for more than a year. In October 1863 Rev. John Pehrson of Marine was called and served the two churches for eight years, living at Scandian Grove. Then the parish was divided and St. Peter called Rev. M. Sandell. He served until 1874, and in addition to his duties in the parish he visited outlying mission fields in southwestern Minnesota. In 1874 he was succeeded by Rev. J. G. Lagerstrom.

A church was built in 1857 on Elm Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets. With some remodelling it served its purpose until 1882, when the present brick structure was erected.

In 1875, when Gustavus Adolphus College was moved to St. Peter, the congregation had a membership of 234. Rev. Lagerstrom and the members of the church contributed generously of their time and money for the establishment of the college.

The pioneer pastor, John Pehrson, retired from the ministry in 1882 and made his home in St. Peter. Except for a few years of service at Marine (Elim, Scandia) his entire ministry was given to the churches in Nicollet county. An interesting characterization of him was made by one of his confirmands, P. P. Quist in an address given in 1933: "Rev. John Pehrson was a schoolmaster in Sweden before he came to this country and was ordained. He was a deep thinker and prepared his sermons, which if well delivered, would have attracted wide attention. He was not of the social type, but I got to know him well during my confirmation training, and learned to love him. I believe he was in closer communion with God than most men, and his confirmation lessons have never been forgotten. Rev. Pehrson was very absent minded, and so seriously absorbed in thoughts that when out walking he would meet people on the road without observing them unless he was aroused from his meditation. While Rev. Pehrson was not a gifted speaker, it was evident that his work was blessed."

A daughter of Rev. Pehrson became the wife of J. A. Edquist, professor of natural sciences at Gustavus Adolphus College for many years. A grand daughter of the pioneer pastor is the wife of the present president of the college, Dr. Edgar Carlson.

Scandian Grove

While the St. Peter Company was booming the new town established on the bank of the Minnesota River, settlers were finding good farm land nearby. A few Norwegian immigrants were the first ones to settle around Torkels Lake, some eight or ten miles northwest of St. Peter. The community was later named Scandian Grove. In 1855 one of the original settlers sold his claim to an immigrant from Sweden, a twenty-eight year old unmarried man, Peter Benson. He had sailed from Sweden in 1854 and spent the following winter in Illinois. In 1855 a number of his relatives arrived from Sweden, including his mother and step-father; his half-brother, Andrew Nelson; and his brother-in-law, Andrew Thorson. They came to Illinois, staying at Princeton until plans could be made for a permanent settlement.

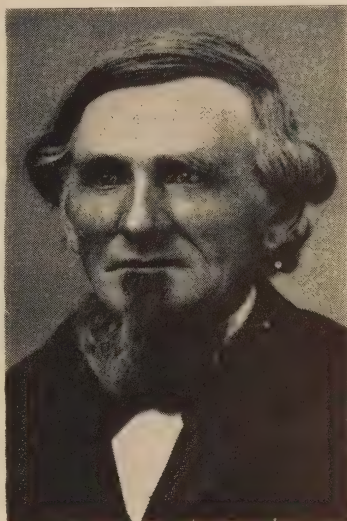
Andrew Thorson had been in America several years before this time, but not in Minnesota. In 1847 he and a companion came to Charleston, South Carolina, worked for a time in New Orleans, tried gold mining in California in 1848, saved up \$2,000 and in 1850 returned to Sweden. He wanted to be a farmer and tried it in Sweden for two years, but he had seen that farming in America offered far greater opportunities. In April, 1855 he and his relatives and some neighbors, numbering thirty altogether, left their homeland and sailed for America. They went at first to Princeton, Illinois where Peter Benson was then living.

Benson and Thorson journeyed up the river to Minnesota, and travelled on foot up the valley of the Minnesota River as far as to Henderson, but were not satisfied with the land they saw. They returned to St. Paul where they happened to meet a man who told them of the land around St. Peter. Benson went to St. Peter, Thorson returned to Princeton. In a few days Benson reported that he had bought a claim for \$300.00 and he urged his relatives and friends to come immediately. Thorson, Nelson, and the elder Nelson's went at once, arriving in Scandian Grove October 7, 1855. A few of the others in the party came later. The following year a few more new families came,

some directly from Sweden, some from Illinois. In June, 1858 the settlement numbered about seventy souls.

Thorson bought twenty head of cattle in St. Paul on his way to Scandian Grove. Not all the new settlers were as well equipped as he when they began farming. But the land was rapidly put under cultivation; in 1858 Thorson said that 1,500 acres were under the plow.

These early settlers were not long in their new homes until they also began to think about the cultivation of the religious life of the community. The first pastor to visit the colony was the Methodist home missionary, Rev. Tidlund. Services were held in the Thorson home, and preliminary steps were taken to organize a Methodist congregation. When the pastor asked Thorson to be the first one to sign his name as a member, he said, "Not now, I want to wait." The others in the group remained silent. No Methodist congregation was organized.



COURTESY H. N. BENSON

Andrew Thorson

This was in 1857. Just a few days after the attempt to organize a Methodist church, Rev. T. N. Hasselquist came for a visit, and Lutheran services were held for the first time in Thorson's house. Shortly after this, P. A. Cederstam visited them, and also Peter Carlson. It did not take long before the Methodist minister preached his farewell sermon, and the people were ready to organize a Lutheran congregation. Even before the organization was effected the people of Scandian Grove joined with their Lutheran countrymen in St. Peter to issue a call to P. A. Cederstam. Shortly after his arrival in May 1858 he led the Scandian Grove settlers in the organizing of a Lutheran congregation. The first meeting for this purpose was held on May 30, 1858. Following is an excerpt from the minutes of this meeting:

"That, Whereas we have been born and reared in the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, we now desire to remain in the same faith, for our own benefit and welfare, and in order to transmit to our

children and children's children that heritage which we have received from our fathers.

"That if it please God, we shall assemble on Sunday, June 13, at the home of Mr. A. Thorson, at the close of the morning worship services to organize a congregation, adopt a constitution, and elect church officers.

"He who of his own free will desires to subscribe to the aforementioned resolution, and who by the grace and help of Jesus, and in strength of the Holy Spirit, will work for the upbuilding of a Christian Evangelical Lutheran congregation here in this locality, may in Jesus Name subscribe to this."

There were seventeen families and two single men who signed, thus becoming the charter members of the First Lutheran Church of Scandian Grove. According to the decision made, they met on June 13 to adopt a constitution and to elect officers. The first deacons were A. Thorson, A. Anderson, A. Westerberg, and Nils Anderson. The congregation was incorporated on June 29, 1859, the first trustees being P. Benson, John Nilsson, and Nils Liljequist.

In the fall of the year 1859 it was voted to build a log cabin meeting house, but at a later session on November 16 this was changed and the people decided to erect a frame building instead, thirty by twenty-four feet and thirteen feet high. This church was completed in 1860 at a cost of \$600.

Many pioneer congregations had internal strife and dissension. Scandian Grove seems to have been a notable exception. There was peace and harmony. No unusual spiritual upheavals took place, but the people in general were faithful in attendance upon church services and lived a quiet and orderly life.

Cederstam lived at first in a tumbledown log shack but soon took up a claim and built his own house, intended to make this his permanent home. This peaceful and pleasant prospect was rudely shattered when on August 18, 1862 the dreadful news came that the Sioux had taken the warpath, and were out with tomahawk and torch to drive the white man away from the ancestral lands of the Sioux.

It was eleven years since the Sioux tribes had ceded these lands. A reservation twenty miles wide and a hundred miles long, along the upper reaches of the Minnesota River was all that was left for the Indians to live on. In 1858 half of this strip was sold to the whites. The money which the Indians received for the lands passed almost immedi-

ately into the hands of the fur traders. Some attempts were made to settle the Indians on their land and teach them agriculture and a civilized way of life. But this was too much of a change for most of them.

In 1862 many Indians actually faced starvation. They were massed in large numbers at the government agency, waiting for their allotment of food and money. The food was there, but the money had been delayed somehow. The Indian agent wanted to wait with distribution of food supplies until the money was available and could be given at the same time. The money was on its way, and would have been ready for distribution at noon on August 18. But a few hours before that time, the fateful moment had come. At Acton, in Meeker county, an Indian hunting party shot and killed five settlers on Sunday, August 17. Realizing the seriousness of what they had done, they reported to Chief Shakopee. He with his warriors went immediately to Chief Little Crow who was then at the Sioux Agency waiting for the distribution of food and money. Little Crow was not eager for war, but he decided there was no other course. On the morning of August 18 the word went out that all white settlements should be attacked. The first skirmish at the Agency brought death to twenty white people, and soon other settlements were attacked. Houses were burned, white men killed and scalped, children kidnapped, horses and cattle stolen. As rapidly as the news could be spread to the various settlements preparations were made for flight to places of safety. Some areas were depopulated. Many communities could not be reached in time and the Indians wrought havoc. More than six hundred settlers in central and western Minnesota were massacred and property worth thousands of dollars was destroyed before the uprising was quelled by the hastily organized troops under Henry H. Sibley.

Scandian Grove was but twenty miles from New Ulm, where some of the fiercest fighting took place. Soon the smoke of burning log cabins and haystacks could be seen also in Nicollet county, and the Scandian Grove settlers were compelled to flee to St. Peter for safety. Some depredations occurred in the Scandian Grove settlement. One fourteen year old girl was tied up with a lasso and dragged on the ground several miles behind an Indian pony. The Indians then concluded she was dead and left her on the prairie. Miraculously she survived the terrific ordeal.

Scandian Grove was approximately the eastern limit of the 1862 outbreak. It was not as seriously affected as many other communities.

Most of the settlers who had farms at Scandian Grove soon returned and life went on quite normally. But the pastor, P. A. Cederstam, and his family moved to Illinois, where they lived for a number of years. They never settled again on their claim at Scandian Grove. There were those who criticized Cederstam for leaving. It seems that he had a special reason, in that his wife was of a very nervous temperament and was unable to face the possibility of further Indian trouble. After some years Cederstam and his family returned to Minnesota, and he gave several years of faithful service as home missionary in various parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Following Cederstam's sudden departure from Scandian Grove the congregation was vacant until 1863 when Rev. John Pehrson of Marine (Elim, Scandia) accepted a call to the St. Peter-Scandian Grove parish.

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The Poor Man's Chance

"Perhaps some one will say: 'It is impossible for a poor man who has no money to settle on the prairie.' It is certainly true that it is not so easy as it is for those who have money. But even the poorest man is welcome; within a short time even his prospects may become bright if he is industrious. Last summer Swedes and Norwegians came here, who had barely enough to pay the expenses of coming here. Now even they have a place of abode. It is therefore possible for the poorest to find a home in the northwest. If any one wants an explanation, here it is: They came to me and asked me to accompany them to the prairie to find unclaimed land; and in order to establish their claims, necessary improvements were made. The new arrivals could not move onto the prairie, having no building material and no farm implements. There was nothing to do but to take lodging with their countrymen and work for them. During the winter they made fencing and the like; and when summer approached they rented a patch of ground from the other farmers. Through their earnings during the winter they now have a house on their land, have done some ploughing and fencing, have prospects for an excellent crop on their rented land, and will soon be ready, at least by next fall, to move into their new homes."

Letter written by A. Thorson from St. Peter and Torkels Lake, Minnesota, published in *Hemlandet* July 6, 1858, reprinted with translation in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America*, 1922-1923, P. 78.

After the division of the parish in 1871 he continued as pastor of Scandian Grove until 1882. During part of this time he also served New Sweden (Bernadotte). Though Rev. Pehrson was characterized as being "not a gifted speaker," the results of his work and influence in Scandian Grove were evident. Few of the pioneer congregations sent as many young men and women away to school. At least thirteen of the sons of the congregation entered the ministry.

In the 'seventies the Scandian Grove farmers suffered from the grasshopper invasion. Four years in succession the crops were seriously damaged. In spite of this fact the Scandian Grove people were among the leaders in getting the Conference to establish its school at St. Peter, and contributed large sums of money for the building of "Old Main." Andrew Thorson, then serving as Register of Deeds of Nicollet County was a member of the committee from St. Peter which appeared before the Conference in 1873 to urge that the school be located in St. Peter. He was a member of the committee elected by the Conference to consider offers from the places that might want to make a bid. When the St. Peter offer had been accepted Thorson and Nelson took the lead in raising \$4,000 in the Scandian Grove Church, which was a congregation of less than 200 members.

Andrew Nelson was the first treasurer of the college after its establishment at St. Peter. He contributed generously to the school, and was also a liberal donor to foreign missions.

Peter Benson, the first Swedish settler at Scandian Grove, a single man when he came in 1855, was married four years later to Malena Pehrson, a Swedish immigrant girl who had come to Scandian Grove in 1857 in company with a sister and brother-in-law. The "Peter Benson family album" has been described by one of the sons, Henry N. Benson, in an address given at the eighty-fifth anniversary of the Scandian Grove church on June 12, 1943. This "album" is of interest and value not only to the members of that family and the community in which they lived, but also to the people of this state, and particularly to the Lutherans. For in the story of the Peter Benson family we have the typical pioneer family, building a home in the wilderness in spite of hardship and danger. (Permission to quote from the "album" has been granted by Henry N. Benson).

After some preliminary remarks and reminiscences about the pioneers of the Scandian Grove church Mr. Benson gave the following description of the family album.

As I open the family album, I find on its first page a picture of a sturdy, kind and honest looking man. Under it is written the following:

Peter Benson, a son of Bengt Quick and Elna Engleson, was born on February 7, 1827, at Ovidsholm, Christianstad Län, Sweden. In the spring of 1854, he left for America against the advice of friends and relatives, and arrived at Galesburg, Illinois. In the spring of 1855, he left for Minnesota. Stopped temporarily at the ground, now covered by the business part of Minneapolis; found the soil too sandy; journeyed up the Minnesota River to Carver, where there were a few Swedish settlers; found the land too heavily wooded. He there heard of the opening of a new settlement near Traverse des Sioux, now St. Peter and left for that place. Soon after his arrival here, he bought some land in Lake Prairie Township, where he established a home and lived until the time of his death. According to records, he was the first Swedish settler in Nicollet County.

On the opposite side of the album is a picture of a friendly and hopeful looking young woman. Under it is inscribed: This is Malena Pehrson, a daughter of Pehr and Charsty Pehrson. She was born on November 7, 1837, near Farlöv, Christianstads Län, Sweden.

In the spring of 1857, she, then nineteen years of age, left for America with her brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Nels Nelson. After an extremely stormy and difficult voyage, they arrived at St. Peter, Minnesota. The Nelsons settled on a farm lying just a little north of this church, the now Navill farm. Malena secured work as a maid with a Presbyterian minister's family, in Kasota. The service at first was difficult for neither understood the language of the other. They were kind and patient and Malena Pehrson learned the language of the land which stood her in good stead in after years. On visits to her sister, Mrs. Nelson, Malena became acquainted with Peter Benson.

In June, 1859, Peter Benson and Malena Pehrson were married. As a bride she went to live in the log cabin which Peter Benson had erected. There they settled and continued to live and rear a family. Peter Benson had helped organize this congregation as one of its charter members and on their marriage, his wife also joined.

Turning the page of the album, I find this:

On July 2, 1860, born to Peter and Malena Benson, a son. He was baptized in the church and named Edward Bodwing Benson. The



COURTESY H. N. BENSON

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Benson

birth record continues in regular old fashioned Swedish Scandinavian style as follows:

February 9, 1862, born a son, baptized and named Charles August Benson.

December 28, 1863, born a daughter, baptized and named Ellen Benson.

November 28, 1865, born a son, baptized and named Anton Peter.

March 13, 1868, born a daughter, christened and named Anna Elizabeth Benson.

January 15, 1870, born a daughter, baptized and named Hilda Maria Benson.

August 1, 1872, born a son, christened Henry Nathaniel Benson.

March 13, 1874, born a son, baptized and named Gustaf Anskarius Benson.

September 7, 1878, born a son, baptized and named Peter Emmanuel Benson.

Interspersed between the above births and deaths are various expressions of gratitude to God for prosperity, health, friends and church. Among these notations is one in 1875, expressing interest in and thank-

fulness for the privilege of participating in the establishment of Gustavus Adolphus College, at St. Peter which would provide an opportunity for education of their children, which they themselves had not had.

Time will not permit the recitals of interesting family experiences through these years. From the accounts of the happy experiences of this family, we turn to its more somber recitals and we read:

On June 29, 1878, Peter Benson died in the prime of life. This left Malena Benson a widow with nine children, the oldest of which was only eighteen years. The records seem to indicate that Peter Benson was the first of the charter members of this church to pass on.

In 1880 and 1881 a terrible scourge of diphtheria came upon members of this church and community. It left heavy marks upon the Peter and Malena Benson family. On the following page within a frame of heavy darkened border, we read:

Died on December 20, 1880, Hilda Maria Benson, 11 years.

Died on December 21, 1880, Gustaf Anskarius Benson, 6½ years.

Died on December 23, 1880, Peter Emmanuel Benson, age 2½ years.

Died on December 24, 1880, on Christmas Eve, Anna Elizabeth Benson, age 12 years.

Died December 28, 1880, Anton Peter Benson, age fifteen years.

These five deaths occurred within eight days and during the Christmas season. They cast a dark gloom over many Christmas anniversaries.

The album record continues and records that Malena Benson moved to St. Peter to live in 1890, and the other members of the family leaving for school and their occupations in various parts of the state.

In June 1890 Ellen Benson married Rev. C. O. Cassel. She and three of the children survive him. She lives at St. Peter.

On April 12, 1929, Malena Benson died at her home at the age of ninety-one years and five months. She had lived past four score years and ten to become a great-grandmother. She lived to see the great transformation of this community from a wilderness to a paradise, from the tallow candle and ox teams to electric lights, automobiles and airplanes.

Charles A. Benson became a banker. He died on March 13, 1936, at St. Peter, leaving his wife, Anna, and four children surviving him.

Edward B. Benson, also became a banker, lived for a number of

years at Litchfield, Minnesota, subsequently at various places and lastly at Kent, Washington, where he died September 7, 1943.

Of the Peter and Malena Benson family who have passed on, all but Charles A. have been laid to rest in God's sacred acre across the way.

Only two of the members of the Peter Benson family remain, Ellen Benson Cassel and Henry Nathaniel Benson, both of whom live at St. Peter, Minnesota.

The Album record closes. The life of a pioneer and charter member's family of this church has been briefly sketched. Only one half of that family lived long enough to give expression to their lives. Why God only knows. As to the contribution that the members of the family that lived to maturity made to this church and to society is not for me to say.



PHOTO COURTESY GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

Mrs. J. Edquist at the melodeon which belonged to her parents, Rev. and Mrs. John Pehrson. It was one of the first musical instruments in the Conference. With Mrs. Edquist are her daughter, Mrs. Edgar Carlson, and her grandson, David Carlson.

I do want to say, however, that father and mother were always proud of this church and thankful of the privilege to be members of it. They loved its members and were grateful for the friendships and encouragements they had from them.

They were thankful too for the opportunity to have their children baptized, confirmed, and preached to and taught the principles of the Christian way of life.

The history of the Benson family is much like that of the other families of this congregation. Life is transient and we have here no permanent abiding place. Today and tomorrow we live and then the sickle of time, sickness and death cut us down and for a time we are remembered but as the years pass on, we and recollection of us is swallowed up in eternity. We are deeply grateful for all the old pioneer mothers and fathers and what they did for us and other succeeding generations. God bless their work and their memory with and among us.

Vista

In the chapters on Red Wing and Cannon River we find mention of the fact that Lutheran families from Eric Norelius' first parish in Indiana were among those who came to Minnesota, a few of them becoming permanent settlers in Goodhue county. There were some who remained at Cannon Falls only a short time and then moved on farther west. This was in 1857. Though settlers were pouring into Minnesota by the thousands there still were few villages of any size west of Owatonna in southern Minnesota. Having investigated the prospects the group from Indiana set out for Waseca county and there established a settlement which later was named Vista. It was sixty or seventy miles from the nearest markets and stores in Hastings and Red Wing. Roads were as yet in a most primitive condition. The settlers at Vista had excellent soil and could raise bountiful crops. They had oxen and wagons. But if they brought a load of wheat to Hastings the money received for it would hardly pay the expenses of the trip. The settlers who arrived in 1857 were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Johnson and son, Mr. and Mrs. L. F. Peterson and daughter, Mrs. Henry Bergquist, Mr. and Mrs. Lars Hokanson and five children, Moses Johnson, Hedvig Peterson, John Peterson, Anders Hultamolan, Gottfred Bjorklund, Nils Kant, Charles Johnson, and Greta Anderson.

In time these conditions improved, good farm homes were built, villages and cities grew and developed, roads and railroads made transportation easy. But even in the first year of farming, while resources were meager the little group of settlers took the first steps in the establishment of a Christian congregation.

Since Norelius had been their pastor in Indiana and he was now in Goodhue county it was natural that they should turn to him for help in their religious affairs. In August 1858 he made his first journey to Waseca county. It was no pleasure ride. He walked to a new settlement in the southwestern corner of Goodhue county where he was able to board a stage going to Owatonna. It was a rainy season and the mud roads were almost impassable. Night came on and a borrowed lantern was soon choked with myriads of mosquitoes, so they had to

travel on in the dark. The wagon got hung up on a stump, requiring the services of all the passengers to get it free. The mud was ankle deep. Bridges were washed out and there was no way to cross except to swim. At two o'clock in the morning they reached Owatonna. The next day Norelius continued his journey on another stage to Wilton, a distance of eighteen miles. A few miles of walking through woods and swamps completed his journey to Vista. It rained all the way. The first night he was at Vista he slept on some hay in a wagon box. The people then lived in sod huts and they had scant protection against the elements. The cabins had bare earth floors which now were muddy. Norelius preferred to sleep in clean rain.

On the eighth of August, which was the Tenth Sunday after Trinity, Norelius preached the first sermon delivered in Waseca county, his topic being "Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, a loving admonition to repentance." In the afternoon the people gathered again for a service out on a hill on the prairie, and at the close of the service they organized the Vista Lutheran Church. There were twenty-two communicants and fourteen children who became charter members. The first deacons were Johan Peterson, Lars F. Peterson, and Johan Larson. A site was agreed on for a church and a cemetery, and the cemetery was dedicated that day. However, later development of the settlement caused the congregation to choose another site. No church was built until 1868.

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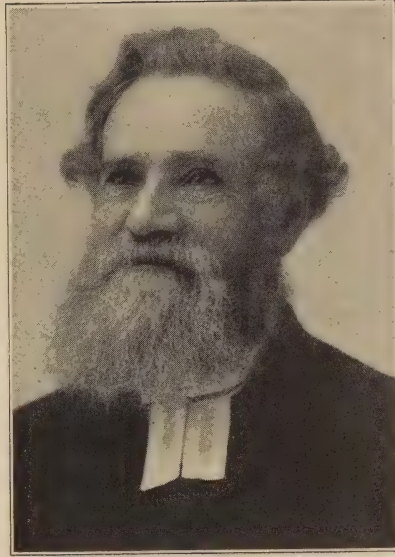
Land Taking in Waseca County

"I will also say something about the character of the land here. It is a level prairie, with plains and sufficient timber. The soil is a sandy humus about three feet deep. The land is similar to that in Illinois or Indiana and is not mountainous, hilly or overgrown with timber, as are so many Swedish pioneer communities in Minnesota. At this place we are five Swedes who have taken a 160 acre claim each. There are twice as many Norwegians. We are expecting a number of countrymen from Indiana any day. Land around here is being taken up very rapidly, but there is still some unclaimed. We are wanting in one thing, and that is a great want. There is no one among us who can expound the pure Gospel. But we hope and pray that the great Lord of the vineyard will not allow us to famish, but will send workers in the harvest."

Letter written by L. F. from Wilton, Waseca county, Minnesota, published in *Hemlandet* July 8, 1857, reprinted with translation in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society* 1922-1923, P. 73-74.

Vista was somewhat isolated from the other congregations that had been organized at that time and it was found difficult to provide pastoral services. Cederstam at Scandian Grove was the nearest pastor, and at the organization of the Conference in October 1858 he was requested to visit the congregation at Vista. It is not certain whether he found any opportunity to do so. The distance was fifty miles and there was no road. From 1859 to 1861 Cederstam and Rev. P. Beckman went to Vista occasionally. From 1861 to 1870 the congregation had the services of a neighboring Norwegian Lutheran pastor Nils Olsen, who had a congregation in the northern part of Waseca county. During the years 1858 to 1870 Swedish and Norwegian immigrant churches were members of the Minnesota Conference. In 1870 a separation took place.

The first resident pastor at Vista was Rev. L. A. Hocanzon, who served the congregation from 1871 to 1876. He had been active as a lay preacher in Lake City and elsewhere in the Conference prior to his ordination in 1871. While serving at Vista he had the sad experience of seeing his wife and infant son drowned in a flooded stream where a bridge had been washed out. Hocanzon himself had a narrow escape.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. L. A. Hocanzon

Preaching Places Prior to 1859

Historical dates are quite often arbitrarily chosen. The events of history do not fall into a clear cut pattern. This is true also of the history of the Minnesota Conference. October 8, 1858 marks the beginning of the Conference as an organization. In the foregoing chapters we have attempted to trace the beginnings of the "Thirteen original congregations" which were organized prior to that date. Such a convenient plan is not quite adequate, however. Some of those original congregations had little or no connection with the Conference at the time of its organization, and probably did not even know about it, while, on the other hand, some groups not yet formally organized were taking an active part in the proceedings.

We have already sensed the fact that the congregations were in three main areas: The St. Croix valley, the Minnesota valley, and Goodhue county. There were five pastors in 1858, three of them in Goodhue county and two in the Minnesota valley. One of them, Cederstam, was not present at the organizing of the Conference but he was nevertheless considered a member from the beginning.

In the three areas where congregations had been established there were also a number of preaching places which were visited occasionally by the pastors, and in some of these places congregations were organized later. In the St. Croix valley were Rusheby, Taylors Falls, Stillwater, and Afton. In the Goodhue county area there were Cannon Falls, Goodhue, and Hastings. In the Minnesota valley were Scandia (Waconia,) Götaholm (Watertown), Jordan, New Sweden, and Camden. This list is probably incomplete, as it was customary for the pioneer pastors to meet with little groups of their Lutheran countrymen here and there in the rural areas and no permanent records have been kept of all such visits. The records that have been preserved are sufficient to indicate that the scope of the Conference activities was far wider than merely the thirteen organized congregations with some 900 members. The five pastors in the Conference were serving at least another dozen preaching places and no one knows how many little scattered groups in the new settlements.

Some of these early Lutheran colonies had no permanence. The pioneer settlers found after a year or two that the land was not what they had thought it to be and they moved on to better locations; or they moved to be in a community where their friends had settled; or they just moved, for no particular reason except a restless feeling, an urge to move because many others were moving.

We have already made mention of the fact that some of the people in Indiana, members of Norelius' first parish, moved to Minnesota. A few of these came to Chisago county and settled near the present site of Rush City. The settlement was called Rusheby. A government road from Taylors Falls to Duluth went near Rusheby, and undoubtedly this was an incentive to new settlers, but for several years the road was hardly passable even in good weather. The Rusheby settlers were isolated the greater part of the year. Cederstam visited the place a few times, usually travelling on foot the twenty mile distance from his home at Chisago Lake.

Though no congregation was organized in Rusheby until 1860, one of the men from that settlement, F. C. Bjorklund, came to the meeting in Chisago Lake on October 8, 1858, was accepted as a lay delegate and was one of the men who that day organized the Minnesota Conference.

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Pioneer Haymaker

"We were on the whole a poorly selected company, as none of us was skilled in any trade, and besides we had only a few poor tools. None of us could cut hay to feed our oxen. I had some idea about it, but through lack of acquaintance with the new tools I came likewise into an embarrassing situation; but as my companions were still more awkward, I had to take hold and become the company's haymaker, which was no thankful job, as the grass was dry, and beaten down by water, with old grass on the ground, which made the work very difficult; besides this we did not have a grindstone with which to sharpen our scythe the only thing we had was a piece of slate. Haymaking became, therefore, both laborious and slow. We used wooden forks of our own manufacture in gathering and stacking the hay."

Carl Roos in *Minnesota Stats Tidning* February 1, 1877, reprinted with translation in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America* 1924-1925, P. 93-95.



PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Stillwater in 1872. Main and Chestnut Streets. School and Courthouse on the Hill.

When the Rusheby congregation was organized under Rev. C. A. Hedengran's leadership in 1860 there were only eleven communicants. Soon after this the Lutheran settlers moved away and the little congregation was no more. Ten years later other Lutherans had moved into those regions, and today there is a strong congregation in Rush City and also a rural church near-by, Calvary, Rush Point.

The village of Taylors Falls was already in existence as a frontier trading post when the original settlers came to Chisago Lake in 1851, but as yet there were no Lutherans. Peter Wicklund, one of the pioneers of '51, settled near Taylors Falls, and a few others came the next year. Norelius conducted services there occasionally in 1854, and the work was continued by Cederstam during his pastorate in Chisago Lake. Hendengran organized the congregation in Taylors Falls on April 10, 1860 in the home of F. W. Lammers, a son-in-law of Daniel Nilson, pioneer settler in the Marine community (Chapter 17).

Stillwater was a busy lumber town in the 'fifties, and among the early settlers were some Lutherans. The first one was Sven Peterson Smith. He and his family came to America in 1853, settling in Chicago. The following year a terrible epidemic of cholera swept the country, and the Smiths lost four of their children. In 1855 they moved to Still-

water and shortly after arriving there Mr. Smith died. The widow established a boarding house, which also was the usual meeting place where Lutheran services were held whenever pastors came through Stillwater on their journeys up or down the St. Croix valley. The congregation was organized in 1871.

In the Goodhue area, as we have seen, five congregations had been organized, Vasa, Red Wing, Cannon River, Spring Garden, and Stockholm, Wisconsin. Vista might also be included in this area. Through the initiative and zeal of Norelius the work was on a well established footing. There were also some preaching places where congregations had not yet been established, particularly Cannon Falls, where services were conducted by Norelius and Beckman, beginning in 1856. A congregation was organized in 1869. Goodhue, Welch, and Hastings also were visited by one or more of the Goodhue pastors, probably beginning in the 'fifties, though definite records are lacking.

The activities of Peter Carlson in the Minnesota valley extended over a wide area, as settlers were flocking into the Suland. His home was in the Union settlement. Twenty miles to the northwest another flourishing colony was coming into existence, having been begun in 1856 when Daniel Justus arrived from Pennsylvania. Ten other families came shortly after him, and a colony was established in the vicinity of a small lake which came to be known as Swede Lake. The early settlers gathered on Sundays to sing and pray, and to read a sermon. By 1858 there were more than a score of families, and they asked Peter Carlson to visit them, which he did. On December 3, 1858 he organized a congregation which chose the name "Götaholm" (Chapter 16).

Camden was the name of a small village in the northwestern part of Carver county, where Lutherans settled in the 'fifties. Once a month for a year and a half Carlson made visits to this place, a fifty mile round trip from his home at East Union. (For these eighteen trips he received as salary the sum of one dollar.) Some time later a congregation was organized, but it did not continue in existence very long.

Carlson also visited a number of other places in the valley, including Scandia (Waconia) where he conducted services a number of times; most of the people in the community were Baptists, and the few Lutherans there decided to join the Götaholm congregation which was only five miles away. A Lutheran congregation was organized later, but the membership was too small to warrant its continuance.

Carlson visited many new settlements both in the Minnesota Valley

and elsewhere, but most of these belong to a somewhat later period. He was the first Minnesota Conference pastor to preach in Minneapolis. His first attempt to seek the Lutherans there was in 1857 but he found none. In the latter part of the year 1862 he conducted services in Minneapolis for the first time, his audience consisting of three young men and two young women, besides one family at whose home the meeting was held. From this small beginning the work was continued, and the Augustana Church was organized 1866 (Chapter 22).

The Minnesota Synod

The five pioneer pastors, P. A. Cederstam, Eric Norelius, Peter Carlsson, Peter Beckman, and J. P. C. Boren, all were members of the Synod of Northern Illinois, having been licensed or ordained by this Synod. Their brethren in Illinois, L. P. Esbjörn, T. N. Hasselquist, Erland Carlsson, and two or three others also belonged to the same synod, Esbjörn having joined at the first meeting in September 1851, Hasselquist shortly after his arrival in this country in 1852, and Carlsson in 1853.

The Synod was composed of Lutherans of various national backgrounds and also diverse theological views. There were men of American, German, Norwegian, and Swedish origin. In their attitudes towards Lutheran doctrine, some were very liberal, others conservative. This was the situation in a large part of the Lutheran Church in America at that time. The General Synod was a rather loosely organized body consisting of a number of local synods, including the Synod of Northern Illinois. The General Synod had no doctrinal agreement. Some of its leaders were known as "new measure" men, or "New Lutherans." They were unwilling to accept the Augsburg Confession except to say that it was "mainly correct." They advocated pulpit and altar fellowship with non-Lutherans. Some of them denied the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

The Minnesota pastors felt dissatisfied, both on account of the theological conflict in the synod and also because of the distance and the tedious means of travel to synodical conventions in Illinois. When Esbjörn joined the Synod of Northern Illinois he insisted on making a statement for the record, to the effect that he and his congregations stood on the unaltered Augsburg Confession. With the addition of other Scandinavian pastors and congregations the conservative confessional tendency in the Synod of Northern Illinois became stronger. In 1855 Esbjörn wrote to Norelius and said that time had vindicated his action. But a few years later he changed his mind on this point.

Norelius felt that there was a great need among the Lutherans in Minnesota and that this field was being neglected—though not inten-

tionally — by the brethren in Illinois. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Norelius and the other pastors in Minnesota were beginning to think about changes in synodical alignment and affiliation.

During the years when Swedish Lutheran congregations were being organized in the middle 'fifties, a similar movement was going on among immigrants of other nationalities, the Norwegians and the Germans, and also among the American born Lutherans who had come to Minnesota from the east. Rev. William A. Passavant, a prominent Lutheran preacher, writer, and editor in Pennsylvania, took great interest in the furtherance of the home mission work in Minnesota. He had become acquainted with the young theological student, Eric Norelius, and kept up an intimate and frequent correspondence with him when he came to Minnesota. In the summer of 1856 Passavant visited Norelius and his wife in their log cabin home at Vasa.

Passavant was concerned about getting English Lutheran churches organized in Minnesota. In 1857 he persuaded "Father" John Christian Frederick Heyer, the veteran India missionary, to go to Minnesota. Under Heyer's leadership congregations were established for the English speaking Lutherans in St. Paul and Red Wing. Heyer found, however, that he had to use German more than English.

With Father Heyer and a few other Lutheran pastors in the field, Passavant urged the organization of a Minnesota Synod, intended to include all the Lutherans in the Territory. Norelius was interested, since he saw in it a possibility of strengthening the Minnesota churches. With the same purpose in mind he had established a paper, *Minnesota Posten*, in 1857. It was the first Swedish paper in Minnesota, published at Red Wing, and circulated among the Swedish immigrants. It did not have a long existence, only from November 1, 1857 to October 19, 1858, but this was the period during which planning and preparation were going on that resulted in the organization of the Minnesota Conference.

It cannot be said that Norelius was enthusiastic in planning for a Minnesota Synod, but he seemed to be willing to go along in such a movement if the Swedes in Illinois and Minnesota could not form a synod of their own. Esbjörn, Hasselquist, and Carlsson all were opposed to the suggestion that their brethren in Minnesota should join the proposed Minnesota Synod, though Esbjörn viewed the movement somewhat sympathetically at first.

When Passavant sensed the feeling of the Illinois brethren on these matters, he counselled Norelius to yield to them for the sake of unity, and he suggested that instead of organizing a Minnesota Synod they might form a "Lutheran Church Union" which would meet annually for discussion but without synodical authority. He also suggested that the Scandinavian pastors in Minnesota seek permission from the Synod of Northern Illinois to organize themselves as a conference of the synod. The Scandinavian pastors in Illinois had organized the Chicago and Mississippi Conferences, which usually met together as a combined conference (the forerunner of the present Illinois Conference).

Correspondence between the pastors in Illinois and Minnesota during the spring and summer of 1858 reveals the story of how the Illinois brethren were trying to persuade the men in Minnesota to remain in the Synod of Northern Illinois, mainly for the sake of unity along nationalistic lines. This story has been given by Norelius in his work, and translated and published by the Augustana Historical Society in Volume XI of its publications.

Esbjörn wrote on March 8: "I see in *Hemlandet*, that there is a question about establishing a Lutheran Synod in Minnesota. If this is true, arrange matters so in the end, that the doctrinal basis will be at least as good as that in the constitution of the congregations, if not better."

After he had considered the matter more carefully and had talked with the rest of the brethren about it, he wrote on April 26: "I have delayed answering your letters, because I wanted to hear first, what the others say about the organizing of a synod in Minnesota. They all agree with me in this, that it could not very well be advantageous. All the dark side of the matter, which you yourself presented in your letter, has full validity. We would be separated, or at least we would seem to be. In addition it seems to me, that you do not now have the materials for an effective synod in Minnesota, and after that unfortunate state loan has become legal you will not get them very soon. (This refers to the "Five Million Loan" endorsed by the voters of Minnesota authorizing state credit for building railroads.)

"If the synod is to consist of Swedes only, it will be entirely impotent. I do not think it at all likely that you can come to any agreement with the Norwegian pastors of Wisconsin. You and your friends and congregations are too much Americanized for them, and they are too formalistic for you. . . .

"Another thing: You are dissatisfied with our synod (the Synod of Northern Illinois) because some [of the members] are "New Lutherans." Who can guarantee, that you will not have them among yourselves also? Do you not already have the aged Heyer? Could you forbid him membership? That would indeed kill the whole project. You have I believe absorbed a wrong conviction (Norelius: "I had this conviction before I came to Columbus") from the brethren in Columbus (Ohio) concerning the relation of the orthodox Christian to the less orthodox, who are willing to cooperate with him and who give him liberty to act according to his faith and conviction. I may call this conviction which you have received too *eremitic* or *donatistic*. It assumes that the orthodox shall separate himself from his more ignorant and less precise brethren, and shall not remain in an "unholy alliance" (Norelius: "Esbjörn had not yet been at Springfield. Compare with this his later utterances.") . . .

"Besides this, if a new synod is *now* organized in Minnesota, the difficulties attending our educational work will be greater than they are now. We cannot and should not separate our forces and divide them between two institutions. We must now *all* help out, otherwise no one will be helped. If we now first of all work together and set Springfield on its feet (the Synod of Northern Illinois' school, Illinois State University, at Springfield, Illinois, where Esbjörn later served as the Scandinavian professor) then we can and shall help out with a like institution for Minnesota. It is bad to have too many and too small institutions. Better have fewer and stronger [ones]. They cost comparatively less and are more efficient. I can well see, how difficult it is for you to come down here that long distance and therefore I suggest the following help. You get a resolution from the synod next fall [to permit you] to organize a conference of your own called the Minnesota Conference. Then you can meet by yourselves and begin to learn 'self government' for yourselves just like a little 'territorial ecclesiastical' [organization] and afterwards, when you are strong enough for it, you can organize your own 'state' (synod.) . . ."

Hasselquist wrote on April 18: "So long as neither our Synod nor the General Synod repudiates the true Augsburg Confession, I would not wish to separate myself from either one, so much the more as 'New Lutheranism' is on the wane. Now of course the proposed synod in Minnesota can join the General Synod and you will not separate yourselves from union with us, even if you unite with the former. It

would be desirable and necessary that we, in any event, should meet once a year to deal with our common problems. . . .”

On the 28th of June he wrote again: “I will now write more at length, but I have already in part expressed myself on the synodical question in *Hemlandet* and you have received a partial answer, I know, from Brothers Esbjörn and Carlsson, in which they have expressed themselves as opposed to the synod [proposed for Minnesota.] I am desirous that you give respectful attention to their advice, although I cannot see anything wrong in your joining another synod, only so that we stand in such synods, which are allied with each other. Unless we do that we will rob ourselves of half the strength we can now claim. Therefore do not take any over hasty step, which you indeed may come to be sorry for and yet cannot retrace.”

On the 28th of June Erland Carlsson wrote: “I see and admit that the day must come, when the congregations in Minnesota ought to unite in a separate synod; that there are certain difficulties, connected with the great distance that separates us, standing in the way of your connection with our synod in Illinois, and that in that same synod there are found some elements with which we cannot be in agreement. But in spite of all this I cannot but deplore and lament the approaching separation. . . .

“You have gone on the assumption that it has already been decided, that the Scandinavian element in our church is to be amalgamated with the American [element] from the very beginning, and that, consequently, it is perfectly in order to organize a synod in Minnesota, which may include both Scandinavians, Germans, and Americans of our confession.” (As to this matter Norelius has given the following explanation: “No such assumption had been either made or used as a starting point by me. Therefore in my answer to Carlsson I said: ‘If the intention is that the Scandinavians shall, and want to, continue in such a mixed union as in the Synod of Northern Illinois and did not think of any separate organization of their own, then it was quite consistent for us in Minnesota to proceed in the same way. Then we would not have to go so far to do what may be done among us.’ From the beginning I was against such a mixture and had at all times worked for a synod among our own people.”)

Carlsson’s final appeal to Norelius was a strong plea: “Yes, brother, I feel that we need you; we will not part from you. On the contrary, if you feel otherwise, I do not know what to say. But it is not only that

we will lose much through a separation. I fear something else still worse.

"Think, brother, if as a result of one or other circumstance the Devil should come between us; think, if an unfortunate strife should arise sooner or later! What would not our church suffer, and how pitiful would not that be and who would be responsible for giving an account of it before God and His Church? On whom would the guilt and judgment rest? O, dear brother, may we not go forward in our own name or act according to our own will! I believe, that the counsel of brothers and friends is not to be altogether despised."

A call for a convention of the Lutheran pastors in Minnesota, together with lay delegates from the congregations, was issued under the leadership of Father Heyer. The convention was held in the Swedish Lutheran Church of Red Wing, Rev. Eric Norelius, pastor, July 3 to 6, 1858. Eight pastors and six lay delegates were present.

Services were held on Saturday, July 3, with sermon by Rev. Beckman. On Sunday, July 4, services were held forenoon, afternoon, and evening, with sermons in English and Swedish.

The pastors present at this convention were: J. C. F. Heyer of the old Pennsylvania Synod; Albrecht Brandt of the Indianapolis Synod; Wm. Wier of the Buffalo Synod; Wm. Thomson of the English Synod of Ohio; P. A. Cederstam of the Synod of Northern Illinois; E. Norelius of the Synod of Northern Illinois; Licentiate P. Beckman of the Synod of Northern Illinois; Licentiate P. Carlson of the Synod of Northern Illinois. Of the six lay delegates who were present five were Swedes.

Heyer was elected as chairman and Thomson as secretary. After considering the material available for a Lutheran Synod in Minnesota, it was thereby ascertained that fifteen congregations were supplied with pastors, four were vacant, and that a large number of new congregations could be organized. The question was discussed, whether the work of organizing a synod should now be taken up. Heyer, Thomson, Wier, and Brandt answered, that they were ready; but the Swedes answered that they were not ready now, and made a declaration as follows: "We regard the organization of a Lutheran synod in Minnesota to be of the highest importance for our Lutheran Church in this state and are in agreement with our German and American brethren in regard to this question. But because this step for us is connected with certain difficulties, which could not be removed for the

present; therefore if we should join the same it could possibly be interpreted as a schism. Before we take any final step in the matter, we wish to hear the full discussion [of the question] by our Swedish brethren in Illinois."

This plan of action was approved and respected by the other brethren, who thereupon adopted the following resolution:

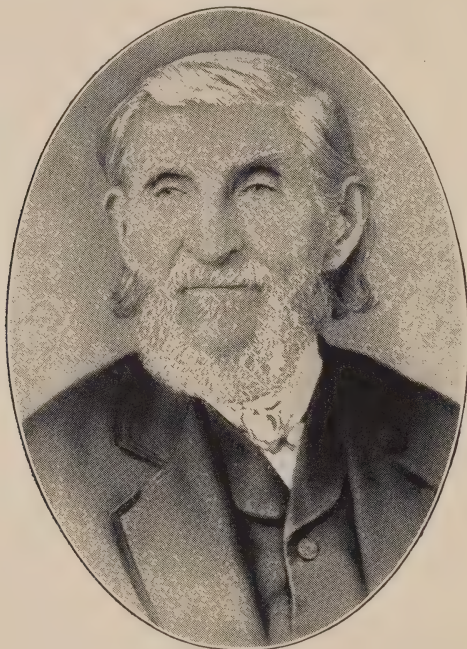
Resolved, that we now proceed to organize an Evangelical Lutheran Synod grounded upon the unaltered Augsburg Confession, as that confession is understood in accordance with the other symbolical books of our church, and that it be called: "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Minnesota."

The four Swedish Lutheran pastors and the lay delegates present from their churches held a special meeting on the following day, July 6, and discussed the religious situation among their people in Minnesota. They all felt that the condition was distressing; the spiritual needs among the Swedes in this country were nowhere so great at that time as in Minnesota; the work was away beyond the capacity of the few pastors, and they felt themselves treated in a step-motherly fashion by both the synod and the conference in Illinois.

Amid all the dissatisfaction with the situation—the doctrinal conflicts in the Synod of Northern Illinois, the persistent, though unintentional neglect of the Minnesota home mission fields, the long journeys to conventions in Illinois, there was after all one strong tie, and that was the feeling of nationalism. The men felt themselves powerfully attracted when the note of Swedish unity was sounded. There was really nothing else that prevented them from joining the new Minnesota Synod.

In the above mentioned meeting they decided to be well represented at the meeting of the United Conferences (Chicago and Mississippi Conferences) which was to be held in Princeton, Illinois in September, and in a brotherly and frank way to take counsel with the rest of the brethren regarding the church work in Minnesota. The hope was expressed that the conference and the synod would at least allow the Minnesota brethren to organize their own conference. This desire on the part of the Minnesota pastors was granted by the conference in Princeton, and by the synod in Mendota, Illinois, immediately afterwards. At their special meeting in Red Wing the Minnesota pastors had decided to have their next meeting in East Union at a time to be determined later. However, after permission had been granted by the

Synod for the organization of the Minnesota Conference, the call for the meeting was published in the September 20 issue of *Minnesota Posten* as follows: "On Wednesday, October 6 the Lutheran pastors in Minnesota will meet in the Swedish Lutheran Church at Chisago Lake for divine services, and for a conference on the following days. Congregations in Minnesota which find it possible to do so are urged to send lay delegates to the meeting."



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Father J. C. F. Heyer

In response to this call four pastors and four lay delegates met in Chisago Lake and organized the Lutheran Minnesota Conference on October 8, 1858 as told in Chapter 1.

Father Heyer felt keenly disappointed that the Swedish pastors and congregations did not join the Minnesota Synod. The new synod did not have a rapid growth. Heyer himself served as home missionary in Minnesota intermittently for some ten years or more. He served as president of the Minnesota Synod for a number of years. During this

time he recommended as pastor for Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Paul Rev. J. H. Sieker, a pastor of the Wisconsin Synod. (If Heyer could have foreseen the future, he would not have done this.) This man became Heyer's successor as president of the Minnesota Synod in 1869, and this brought "the spirit of Missouri" into the Minnesota Synod. The Wisconsin Synod was friendly towards the Missouri Synod, and in 1872 when Missouri took the lead in organizing the Synodical Conference, Rev. Sieker saw to it that the Minnesota Synod was included in that organization. Later the Minnesota Synod was amalgamated with the Wisconsin Synod.

The First Twenty Months

The Minnesota Conference remained as a part of the Synod of Northern Illinois for twenty months, from October 8, 1858 to June 5, 1860, when the Augustana Synod was organized. It is beyond the scope of this book to trace in any detail the events that led up to the organization of the Augustana Synod. Briefly stated, the secession of the Swedish Lutheran pastors from the Synod of Northern Illinois was due to the conflicting theological views of the men who had tried for nine years to work side by side in that synod. The occasion which brought about the split was the argument between Esbjörn, the Scandinavian professor in the synod's school at Springfield and the president of the school, Dr. W. M. Reynolds. The entire story has been told by Dr. George M. Stephenson in *The Founding of the Augustana Synod*.

During these months the infant Minnesota Conference was learning to stand and walk on its own feet. Four conference meetings were held during this time: In East Union February 10-12, 1859; in Scandian Grove June 15-18, 1859; in Spring Garden August 26-27, 1859; and in Chisago Lake February 22, 1860. At all these meetings a large portion of the time was devoted to discussions as to how they could provide spiritual care for the vacant congregations and how to reach out to the ever expanding home mission fields.

The energetic young leader, Norelius, left Minnesota in the fall of 1858 for Chicago, and did not return to this state until in the fall of 1860 when he came to serve as the Augustana Synod's travelling home missionary. The other four Minnesota pastors, Cederstam, Carlson, Beckman, and Boren managed to keep the work going in the existing congregations and found time for long and difficult journeys to seek the Lutherans in some of the new settlements. In August 1859 one new recruit was added to the ministerium of the Conference, when C. A. Hedengran accepted a call to Chisago Lake. He had served as lay preacher in West Union for a year, and won the confidence of the people as well as of the pastors in Minnesota. He was granted a license to preach at the fall meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois and

was ordained by the Augustana Synod at its organization meeting in June, 1860.

Immigration slowed down somewhat in the late 'fifties, but the pastors found enough to do in ministering to the multitudes of their countrymen who had come to Minnesota. Since no pastor was stationed in the St. Croix valley until Hedengran's arrival in the fall of 1859, it was agreed that Pastors Boren, Carlson, and Beckman should take turns visiting Chisago Lake and other points in the St. Croix valley once a month. They were also to visit St. Paul on these tours. Such a journey would mean a round trip of some two hundred miles, by stage, river steamer, horse and wagon or on horseback, and many a weary mile on foot. Stops would be made at Chisago Lake, Taylors Falls, Marine, Stillwater, St. Paul, and usually a number of small settlements, with at least two or three services at each place. The journey would require about two or three weeks.

Peter Carlson describes one of these missionary journeys: "I visited Chisago county often during the time when they had no pastor up there. One time I travelled in company with schoolmaster L. Anderson and colporteur Ole Paulson to Horse Lake, Wisconsin, preached there a couple of times and argued with the Methodist minister and some others until midnight. The next morning we were to drive across the St. Croix River, but our horses fell into a "boom" and it was with great effort we rescued them. Wet though I was I had to preach at Islycke at ten o'clock, at two o'clock in the old Marine church, and in the evening in the village of Marine. Then we drove all night to St. Paul and arrived just as Johan Johanson was to conduct morning devotions. Then all the three missionaries fell asleep, so he had to wake us up."

The Vista settlement was assigned to Cederstam and Beckman, to be visited "as often as possible." Stockholm, Wisconsin was to be looked after by Boren. Götaholm, Scandia and Camden were in Carlson's territory and he was to visit each of these places once a month. This assignment was not always easy to fulfill. Roads and bridges were practically non-existent. Peter Carlson has described one of his journeys in graphic terms: "One time when I was going through the woods to Camden the horse and wagon got stuck in a swamp. I worked for a long time to get them out, but all in vain. Divine services had been announced, and there I was out in the forest four or five miles from any house. I unhitched the horse and removed the harness except for bridle and reins. Standing there in water and mud up to my knees I held the reins in one hand and the whip in the other

urging the horse to go. But for each attempt that was made he sank deeper into the mud, and at last it seemed utterly hopeless. Then while holding reins and whip I folded my hands and began to talk to God (for only now when no other help was at hand did I remember Him) and said, 'Well now, dear God, I have done all that can be done, and neither human nor brute strength is of any avail; services have been announced, and I am on time. I have not neglected anything. Now if I cannot come and the people complain and you are dishonored as a result of it, this you will have to take care of, for I will not. Therefore, the cause is Yours, You can help if You want to, otherwise it will have to be as it is. Therefore, O Lord, fulfill Your promises! Amen! Then I gave a sign to the horse that he should try again, and at once he got up, but fell over on the other side; however, he did not give up until he stood on solid ground. I experienced God's providential care on this occasion, for I was standing in such a way that the horse almost fell on me and I would have been unable to move quickly. I arrived at the services a couple of hours late but the people were still there. I was covered with mud, but after I had washed my hands and face I preached to them just as I was."

New fields that claimed the attention of the pastors at this time were "Swan Lake and the district west of it" (in Nicollet county,) assigned to Cederstam at the conference in February 1859; "A Norwegian Lutheran congregation in Zumbro, Dodge county" which as yet had no pastor, and which was assigned to Boren and colporteur O. Paulson; "Forest City and surrounding district" (in Meeker county) to be visited "as soon as possible" by Carlson. These assignments made by the Conference in February 1859 were faithfully fulfilled as is evidenced by reports given at the June meeting the same year, except that the Forest City journey had proved to be impossible. Carlson reported that he could not undertake that journey until the latter part of May. He then started on the long trip with his own horse, but because of bad roads and high water he was forced to return after traveling forty miles. At the August meeting of the conference Carlson reported that the mission journey to Forest City had been completed and that he had found in that area about seventy Swedish families and some Norwegians. He had also gone farther west into Monongalia county (at present the northern part of Kandiyohi county) and had organized a congregation called New Sweden, consisting of thirty families. This took place on July 22, 1859 in a log cabin belonging to one of the settlers located on the northwest shore of Eagle Lake, not

far from where the Bethesda Old Folks Home is now located. This was the first Lutheran congregation in this section of the state. Its further history will be given in another chapter (Chapter 27).

Small congregations were also organized at this time in Meeker county, one known as Marinelund, with twelve or fourteen families, in the township of Swede Grove, and another one called Scandinavian. Neither of these was ever listed in the statistical report of the Augustana Synod. Evidently they had no permanent existence, since occasional visits by traveling missionaries were few and far between until after the Civil War. The Marinelund settlement was the nucleus which later developed into a large and well established congregation in Grove City, organized 1868.

The Minnesota Conference at this time consisted of both Swedish and Norwegian Lutheran congregations. The Swedes were in the majority and it seems that no Norwegian Lutheran pastor took part in an official way in the conference conventions, and very likely did not attend any conference meeting, until October 19, 1860 when Pastor L. Norem is listed as one of those present and taking part in the proceedings. Lay delegates from the Norwegian congregations were in attendance occasionally. Three Norwegian pastors have served as conference presidents, L. Norem in 1861, N. Olson in 1865, and O. Paulson in 1869. N. Olson served as secretary in 1863, and O. Paulson in 1868.

In the minutes of the first convention of the Augustana Synod (1860) the following congregations are listed as being in Minnesota:

| Place | Year of Organization | Communicants | Pastor |
|---|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Newberry, etc. (Fillmore county) | | 160 | A. Scheie |
| Preston, etc. | 1858 | 41 | N. Olsen |
| Cannon Falls | 1857 | 30 | P. Beckman |
| Spring Garden | 1858 | 45 | P. Beckman |
| Vasa | 1855 | 139 | J. P. C. Boren |
| Red Wing | 1855 | 84 | J. P. C. Boren |
| East Union | 1858 | 171 | P. Carlson |
| West Union | 1858 | 107 | P. Carlson |
| Gotaeholm | 1858 | ... | P. Carlson |
| Chisago Lake | 1854 | 370 | C. A. Hedengran |
| Marine | 1855 | 75 | C. A. Hedengran |
| Taylor's Falls | 1860 | 24 | C. A. Hedengran |
| Rusheby | 1860 | 11 | C. A. Hedengran |
| Scandian Grove | 1858 | 66 | P. A. Cederstam |
| St. Peter | 1856 | 30 | P. A. Cederstam |

Not until 1873 were the congregations listed by conferences in the synodical statistical reports, and the statistics were not included in the conference minutes until 1879. For this reason it is difficult and sometimes impossible to determine which congregations belonged to the Minnesota Conference in the early period of its existence. From various references in the minutes we are able to say that the following congregations in addition to those listed above, belonged to the Minnesota Conference in 1860.

| Place | Year of Organization | Communicants | Pastor |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Decorah, Iowa | 1853 | 183 | P. Asbjornson |
| Bostwick Valley, Wis. | 1856 | 40 | L. H. Norem |
| Cambridge, Iowa | 1855 | 88 | O. Sheldahl |

It is evident that the reports are incomplete for the first year. The St. Paul congregation does not appear in the statistics until 1861. Scandia (Carver county) and Stockholm, Wisconsin are listed in 1862 for the first time. Vista is listed in 1865 for the first time. The congregations organized by Peter Carlson in Meeker county in 1859 were never listed in the statistics. The congregation organized by him in Monongalia county, called New Sweden, is undoubtedly the same as the one listed as "Columbia, Minnesota" in the minutes of 1861 (Columbia was the name of a small village on the west shore of Green Lake, near the present site of Spicer.)

Other Norwegian Lutheran congregations organized 1860 and served by pastors of the Minnesota Conference were: Pontoppidan's, McLeod county, organized 1860 by Eric Norelius, and served occasionally by Peter Carlson; Wilton, Waseca county; Christiania, Dakota county; Le Sueur River, Waseca county. The Augustana Synod was a Scandinavian group until 1870, when by mutual agreement and in friendly consultation it was decided to separate. The Norwegian pastors and congregations withdrew and formed their own organization. The Swedish contingent remained as the Lutheran Augustana Synod. Of the Norwegian Lutheran congregations which originally belonged to the Minnesota Conference the following are still in existence and belong now to the Evangelical Lutheran Church: Preston, Faribault, Le Sueur River, Owatonna, Rice Lake, Rushford, Whalan, Swede Grove, Christiania, Minn.; Springfield Church, Decorah, Iowa; Eau

Claire, Menomonie (Little Elk Creek), Elk Mound (Big Elk Creek), Stoughton, Wisconsin, and possibly a few others.

The Minnesota Conference sought to maintain friendly relations with the other Lutherans working in the state, particularly the Minnesota Synod. A problem which produced a test of this friendly relationship was the appearance in Minnesota of a preacher by the name of B. G. P. Berglund. He had been granted a license by the Synod of Northern Illinois, but after three or four years' trial the Synod considered him unfitted to fill the office of pastor. He then went to Minnesota and some of the pastors of the Minnesota Synod promised him that their synod would relicense or ordain him. He visited Swedish churches in Minnesota and proved to be a trouble maker. Both the president of the Minnesota Synod, Father Heyer, and the secretary, William Thomson, saw that it would not do to receive him into their fold. At the February meeting of the Minnesota Conference, in 1860, the congregations were warned "to be careful in regard to him and to all such creators of factions."

At the same meeting the Minnesota Conference elected P. A. Cederstam to go as fraternal delegate to the convention of the Minnesota Synod to be held in St. Paul on July 5, in recognition of friendly relationship.

Watertown

The first congregation organized after the establishment of the Minnesota Conference was the Götaholm congregation. It now has its church in Watertown, but when the congregation had its beginning the village was still small, and the main settlement was a few miles to the south.

Watertown is on the northern edge of Carver county. We have seen (Chapter 9) how the Lutherans began settling in the southern part of the county, at East Union, in 1855. The next year a Swedish immigrant, Daniel Justus, ventured eighteen miles through the Big Woods northwest of Carver, where he settled near a lake which soon became known as Swede Lake. New settlers at this lake in 1857 were Jens Jenson, Ulrik Ingmanson, and Carl Swensson. Others arrived in the following year, among them being Olof Anderson, a former member of the riksdag (parliament) of Sweden. He was a unique exception to the general rule. Few men of national prominence joined the immigrant ranks. He evidently was well fitted for pioneer life, and it is also noteworthy that he was an able and willing supporter of the church from the time of its organization.

In the fall of 1858 the colony consisted of twenty-three Swedish families, about a hundred persons. Peter Carlson made occasional visits to the new settlement, but before any pastor came the people gathered on Sundays for worship in the homes. Desiring to have an organized congregation, Carlson was asked to help them in this matter. At a meeting held on December 3, 1858, the Götaholm congregation was organized with forty-five communicants. Olof Anderson served as secretary. Deacons elected were Olof Anderson, S. Hallgren, Philip O. Johnson, Carl Swenson, P. Oberg, and J. Miller; trustees were O. Anderson, J. P. Miller and John Tack. The name "Götaholm" was derived as follows: A part of Sweden is known as "Götaland," (land of the Goths); Holm was the name of a Lutheran pastor who came to America as missionary to the Delaware Indians in colonial times.

From 1858 to 1866 Peter Carlson was the pastor, usually coming for a service once a month, in spite of difficult travelling, and small

remuneration. A Sunday school was begun in 1860. The public school, organized the same year as the congregation, was for a number of years practically an activity of the church. The minutes of the public school meetings were entered in the record book of the church.

The first church was built in 1859. It was twenty-four by sixteen feet in size and was used not only for church services but also as a school house. It stood near Swede Lake, about two miles from the village of Watertown, although at that time the village was developing and growing. There was a mill, two stores, and several other buildings. But as yet no Lutherans had settled in the village, and to the farmers at Swede Lake it seemed most logical to have the church in their own community. A new church, erected in 1870, was built in Watertown. This was replaced by a larger church in 1890.

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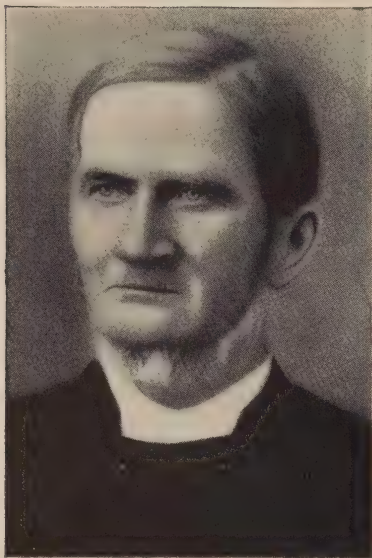
When Watertown Was Two Years Old

"Our settlement at present consists of twenty-three Swedish and two Norwegian families, some over one hundred persons in all. This number will probably double in a short time, as we are expecting several families from Sweden and different parts of America. The settlement is situated about two miles south of Watertown. This little village which lies on the south branch of the Crow river was laid out only two years ago, and has a steam saw, a flour mill, two stores, and a number of comfortable buildings. A steam boat is said to be under construction, which will operate on the river next summer, thereby affording good facilities for communication by water with Minnesota's most important towns."

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"All the Swedes hereabouts are of the Lutheran faith. Three acres of land have been purchased by the congregation, located on the western shore of the beautiful little Swede Lake, along the county road between Watertown and Chaska. It is the intention to build a church and school house on the plot next summer. Lumber has already been hewn and hauled. Although we have no minister, we assemble every Sunday to meditate upon the Word of God by reading sermons from books of sermons and other religious writings."

Letter written by J. P. Miller from Watertown, Minnesota, published in *Hemlandet* January 29, 1859, reprinted with translation in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America* 1922-1923. P. 83, 84.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. John S. Nilson

The first resident pastor was Rev. John S. Nilson. Coming to Götaholm following his ordination in 1866 he served the congregation seven years, during which time a parsonage was built, and the second church. Nilson was a faithful and zealous home missionary, and Watertown became a center for the religious development of the surrounding regions. Congregations were organized in Mooers Prairie, Buffalo, Waverly, Brush Prairie, and other near-by settlements. Nilson was succeeded by Rev. J. Alm in 1875.

At the eightieth anniversary of the congregation in 1938, Mrs. Cecilia Hedberg, the oldest daughter of Rev. Nilson, gave interesting recollections of early times in

the community. The experiences of this pioneer pastor's family undoubtedly were typical of the times in all parts of the Minnesota Conference. A few quotations may suffice:

"The good people met us with friendliness and shared the necessities of life with us as purses were slim in those days. . . . In 1870, I think, the first Sunday school picnic was held in Peter Justus' grove. . . . Our first parochial school teacher was the crippled Miss Maja Stina Olson from Carver. In her teaching she stressed personal prayer. The young Miss Mathilda Johnson, member of the church, was a lover of singing and knew how to teach it in her sweet way. . . . Bible history, Catechism, and 'Kastman's Läsebok' (reader) were the subjects taught after the A-B-C books were finished. Hymns were sung at the opening, 9 A.M. The recess periods were of course too brief. There were luscious strawberries and wild roses to capture; the inviting grapevines serving as veritable swings; and the alluring lakeshore. . . . The pasture with its beautiful hard maple grove yielded the famous maple sirup and sugar. Even we little folks were permitted to help carry the sweet sap in our tin pails. No rubbers were necessary, for

we used wooden shoes made by a man from Skone, Ola Swenson. Father, being a good hunter, brought home quail and ducks in season. . . . Once on a cold winter's day my father brought us way out on Swede Lake to show us the lively fish under the clear, thick ice. Often in the summertime one could listen to *Hemlandssånger* (a popular book of Swedish religious songs used in all the pioneer churches) sung to the accompaniment of accordion music, from a boat or the opposite shore. . . . Father organized and led the first choir. Some of the members were J. P. Hendricks, P. O. Johnson, John Hall, John Engholm, Elias Anderson and sisters, my brother Samuel and myself. The song 'Hosianna i höjden' was rendered at the first Christmas service in the new church in 1870. The only instrument used was the tuning fork. The 'psalmodikon' was found in many homes. . . ."

Taylors Falls

The Dalles of the St. Croix, forming part of the boundary between Minnesota and Wisconsin, are known far and wide as a spot of unique beauty and interest. The two states have here established Interstate Park. The first white man to see the place was Du Luth, when he journeyed down the river in 1680. At the upper end of the dalles is a waterfall which caught the attention of early explorers. Under the



PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*The Dalles of the St. Croix at Taylors Falls, showing
the old interstate bridge.*

French regime a small fort was built there. Fur traders had posts nearby. But for 150 years after Du Luth's voyage, no permanent white settlement was made.

When the Chippewa ceded the triangle between the St. Croix and the Mississippi in 1837 Jesse Taylor, a laborer at Fort Snelling, journeyed up the St. Croix and took a claim at the dalles. After attempting to build a mill and a blacksmith shop he left the place about 1846, selling his claim to another Taylor. Other settlers arriving soon after, a little village sprang up, named Taylors Falls in honor of the first claimholder. The village was platted in 1851, and a post office was established. The population then was probably about fifty.

It was in this year that Per Anderson and the first Chisago Lake settlers arrived. Though they all went some ten miles west to take their claims, one of the families, Per Wicklund's, later settled on a farm near Taylors Falls. J. Bylund's came the same year (1851). In 1852 a newly married couple, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Lammers, established their home near-by. Mrs. Lammers was a daughter of Daniel Nilson of Marine, and was the first Swedish bride in Minnesota (Chapter 5). They had become acquainted while working for a storekeeper, H. C. Folsom, in Taylors Falls. Three families and three single men arrived in 1853.

In 1854 Taylors Falls consisted of six dwelling houses, two stores, two hotels, and a mill. That summer Eric Norelius visited the place a few times and conducted services for the Lutheran people. (It is probable that Erland Carlsson also was there in May, 1854, when he organized the Chisago Lake congregation.) Gradually the settlement grew in numbers, and beginning with the A. N. Holm family in 1854, a few of the Lutherans settled in the village.

When Cederstam was pastor in Chisago Lake, 1855 to 1858, he visited Taylors Falls more or less regularly. C. A. Hedengran began his ministry in Chisago Lake in the fall of 1859, and the following year he organized a congregation in Taylors Falls. By that time the village had grown to include several new stores, a newspaper, and a private school



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Old Church in Taylors Falls

"Chisago Seminary" with Mr. and Mrs. A. A. York offering instruction in "Common English branches," "Higher English branches," and "Ornamental branches and music." Two churches, Methodist and Baptist, were in existence. Taylors Falls was the county seat. There was a twice a week stage to Stillwater, and in summer time steamboats on the river furnished service to Stillwater and Prescott.

The First Lutheran Church of Taylors Falls was organized in the F. W. Lammers home on April 10, 1860, under the leadership of Pastor Hedengran. Deacons elected were A. Anderson and Daniel Nelson; trustees were the same two men and C. U. Carlson. Carlson was also the first secretary of the congregation. There were only ten charter members enrolled, and strange as it seems, this list did not include the Lammer's in whose home the meeting was held. They were undoubtedly members of the Marine congregation (Scandia) and preferred to remain there.

Though the members were few, they decided to proceed with the erection of a church. The lot for it had been donated by N. C. D. Taylor. The *Taylors Falls Reporter* for August 30, 1860, carried this news item: "The new Swede Church is completed and meetings are held regularly there every Sabbath."

For twelve years the congregation belonged to the Chisago Lake parish and was served by Hedengran. In 1872 P. A. Cederstam accepted a call to serve as pastor of Taylors Falls, Sand Lake and Balsam. After his resignation in 1874, Rev. A. F. Tornell was called and served until 1878. He was succeeded by M. Sponberg.

Norelius as Traveling Missionary, 1860-61

The darkest period in our national history was settling down upon America at the time when the Lutheran Augustana Synod was launched in 1860. It was in Springfield, Illinois, that the decision was made by Esbjörn to separate himself from those with whom he could no longer agree. From that same city, a few months later, there went forth a man to accept the nomination as Republican candidate for President of the United States. As the campaign lines were drawn, it became evident that Lincoln in the President's office meant definite opposition to slavery. From the South there came talk of secession. The situation grew more ominous week by week, and soon after Lincoln's inauguration in March 1861 the war clouds broke, bringing their deluge of blood, sorrow, national disruption.

All the congregations of the Augustana Synod were in the northern states. Secession of the slave states caused no internal strife in the synod. The areas where the synod had its churches were free from the ravages of war. But the dark clouds of carnage had their effect on the people of the Augustana Synod. Minnesota was far from the field of battle, and the youngest state in the union, but it was the first to respond to Lincoln's call for volunteers. Before the war was over fourteen per cent of the 1860 population of Minnesota had been mustered into the army, and thousands of the boys in blue never came back. Among those who went out there were many young Lutheran men, recent arrivals in this land of freedom, but fervent in love to the land of their adoption and loyal to their heroic leader, Abraham Lincoln. One regiment of soldiers was composed almost entirely of Lutherans. This was the Third Minnesota, recruited by Hans Mattson in Goodhue County.

During this period of war and the dark prospect of a divided nation, Minnesota also had to fight an Indian war which for a few weeks was intense in its fury, bringing death to more than six hundred settlers, destruction of their homes, and the dispersion of congregations.

In spite of the problems of war and the personal sorrows and sacrifices endured by many of her citizens, the state of Minnesota advanced in several respects during the Civil War period. The loss in man power

caused by the war was more than made up by the influx of new settlers. The Homestead Law of 1862 opened up millions of acres of free land, and people were not slow in taking advantage of the opportunities. The National Banking Law of 1863 stabilized the financial system. Prices for farm products were high, and the production of wheat increased tremendously. In 1862 the first railroad in Minnesota began operation between St. Paul and St. Anthony, and soon the lines were being extended in various directions.

In the early years of the 'sixties immigration into Minnesota was not heavy, but beginning in 1864 the stream of new settlers increased in volume, and among the new immigrants were many Lutherans. During the Civil War very few new congregations were organized in the Minnesota Conference, but the pastors had enough to do to take care of the work that was already started and to explore the new regions that had not previously been reached. There was a gradual extension westward as the course of empire moved the frontier ever further towards the setting sun.

The Minnesota Conference had a small beginning—only five pastors and thirteen congregations, some of which were very small—but it was fortunate for the future of Lutheranism in this area that a beginning was made before the Civil War. As a result of the basic work done by those few, scattered, penniless Lutheran pioneers in the 'fifties there was a spiritual foundation laid, there was a constitution formulated on confessional Lutheran principles, and there was at least a semblance of an organization ready to tackle the enormous problem of bringing the ministrations of the Church to the hundreds of new settlements that were suddenly calling for help when the stream of Lutheran immigration became a flood shortly after the Civil War.

Of the congregations now belonging to the Minnesota Conference only one was organized during the Civil War. This one is the congregation in Cambridge organized 1864. The New Sweden congregation organized in Monongalia (Kandiyohi) county in 1859, was divided and several new congregations organized in 1861 and 1862. These were dispersed by the Indian outbreak. Although the Minnesota Conference gained only one congregation during the Civil War period, the story of home missions in these years is an epic of courage and faithfulness on the part of the pastors and the churches.

While still belonging to the Synod of Northern Illinois the Minnesota Conference had begun to take definite steps towards securing a

travelling home missionary. These efforts were without success. At the organization meeting of the Augustana Synod Eric Norelius introduced some resolutions regarding home missions. A committee of three was elected to promote the home mission cause in the synod, and this committee was authorized to call a travelling missionary for Minnesota. Rev. T. N. Hasselquist, Rev. O. J. Hatlestad, and Mr. Ole Paulson were elected as the home mission committee. At the urgent request of Cederstam, Beckman, and Peter Carlson, Eric Norelius was called to serve as the travelling home missionary, and it was agreed that he should serve the congregation in St. Paul and have his home there.

In the book "Early Life of Eric Norelius" (published by Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Illinois) he has given an account of his work which reveals something of the hardships and dangers of a missionary in Minnesota in the early 'sixties:

"In November, as soon as I had made the most necessary arrangements for the care of my family, I was going out on my first journey. At that time there were no railroads in Minnesota. The nearest railroad station was at Dunleith, Illinois. In summer one could travel by boat on the Mississippi, the Minnesota, and the St. Croix rivers; but in winter, or whenever one wanted to go into the interior, one must either travel on foot or else hire horses or oxen.

"I had about \$35 or \$40 in gold with which to buy the equipment I needed.* This money I handed to a Swede, a member of the congregation in St. Paul, and asked him to buy me a horse and carriage, of whatever kind he could get for that amount, for I had nothing more to spend. He went downtown and after a while he returned with a big horse, lame in the front legs, a very poor harness, and a light, rickety lumber wagon. Still I was glad to have something to drive with, and I fixed up the outfit as best I could.

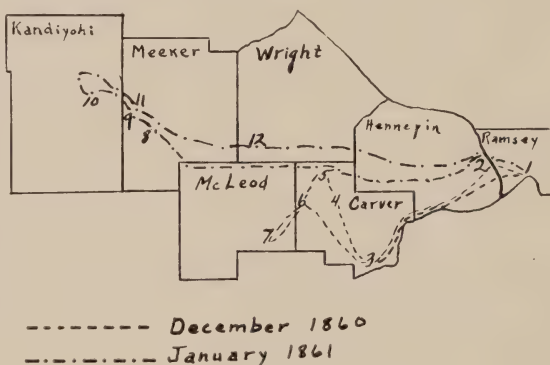
"It so happened that Rev. P. Carlson from East Union came to St. Paul, and I had an opportunity to consult him about my journey. It was decided that I should go home with him and from there continue the journey through the woods to Scandia, Götaholm, Camden, etc. The man that had bought the horse for me acted very queerly, as if he were afraid of something, told me that I must be careful, and finally

* At its meeting in October 1860 the Minnesota Conference had voted that the contents of the conference treasury be turned over to the travelling missionary, as an interest-free loan for one year, to be used for the purchase of a horse and carriage; and the Conference had also obligated itself to secure feed for a horse.

let me know that he probably had been dealing with a horse thief. He was anxious to go along with me to Minneapolis, which then was quite different from what it is today. It was very unpleasant to be in such a state of uncertainty, but there was nothing to do but go. My friend drove hither and thither in the city, and when I asked the reason for this he answered in riddles. When he left me, I continued my journey in company with Rev. Carlson to his home and we had no difficulty. Rev. Carlson lived in a little log house that had belonged to Rev. Hedengran when he was a pioneer settler in East Union.

Home mission journeys of Eric Norelius in the winter of 1860-61.

1. St. Paul; 2. Minneapolis; 3. East Union;
4. Scandia (Waconia); 5. Götaholm (Watertown); 6. Camden; 7. Glencoe; 8. Lake Ripley; 9. Swede Grove;
10. Nest Lake; 11. Ola Monson's; 12. Mooers Prairie.



"It was not a stately parsonage. It consisted of one room. In this one room they cooked, baked, washed clothes, etc., slept, read, and prayed. I think we were in all a dozen people there during the days I stayed there. A home made ladder served as stairway to the loft. Between the ladder and the wall, where there was a small window, the pastor had partitioned off a small room for a study. The partitions were of cloth. In this little den he had his books, and though he could not shut out the sound of what went on in the house, he could, nevertheless, imagine that he was alone. . . .

"To be exact, it was on Saturday evening, December 1, that I came with Brother P. Carlson to East Union. The distance from St. Paul was at that time reckoned at forty-seven miles. This was not so bad for a day's drive with a lame horse. On Sunday I preached in both East and West Union and in those days the people were eager to hear the Word of God. Now it began to snow, and winter was coming on, so it was necessary for me to provide myself with a sleigh. On Monday, while I was busy arranging for this and getting ready for my journey,

two men clad in fur coats came riding in a wagon. They got off the wagon and asked me if I had come from St. Paul the previous Saturday, whereupon one of them took out a piece of paper (replevin) and read it to me. Then they took my horse and wagon, and told me that they could take me too if they wanted to, and then they went their way. There I stood, the Augustana Synod's home missionary, empty handed, without the horse and wagon, without money. If the man who bought the horse for me had a part in the villainy I do not know, but it certainly seemed suspicious. Poor man, he took his own life at last.

"But what was I to do now? Should I consider this adversity as a sign from the Lord that He did not approve of my proposed journey, or was it just one of these trials with which God plays as it were with His children? At the same time that I felt keenly the difficulty of the situation and regarded it as an occasion for further self-examination I also had a definite feeling of cheerfulness in my heart, and it seemed that a voice was calling to me, 'Don't give up, there's a way.' And I also had friends in East Union who were undaunted and zealous for the cause. Rev. P. Carlson said, 'You may borrow my sleigh.' Ole Paulson . . . said 'I have a horse that you may borrow. To tell the truth, the horse is blind, but I have already driven several hundred miles on preaching tours, and when you get used to driving him, it works all right. I thanked him for this offer, and after some time I became owner of both horse and sleigh, for I bought the outfit and traveled far and wide with it in Minnesota. . . .

"My destination on this first journey was originally Forest City, the region west of the great forest, or what are now Meeker and Kandiyohi counties; but since it was only a short time before Christmas I was advised by my friends in East Union to make a shorter trip before Christmas through the forests in Carver and McLeod counties and visit the pioneer settlements there. Rev. Carlson, who had visited these places several times already, sketched a map of the district. . . .

"On Wednesday, December 5, I drove ten miles through the woods to Waconia. . . . A short distance away, west of the lake, lived a few Swedish families who were of the Lutheran faith. I lodged with a family by the name of Swanberg and conducted a devotional service there in the evening with eight persons in attendance. But they were too few to organize a congregation.

"On Thursday, December 6, I drove across the lake to Scandia,

which is on the northeast side of the lake, about two miles from Waconia. . . . Scandia is a Baptist settlement of about twenty-five or thirty families. . . . I was invited to preach in their church, a simple little log house, and I was grateful for this invitation. My text was Zechariah 12:9-13. Twenty or thirty persons were present and they seemed to listen attentively to the preaching of the Word. A man by the name of Erik Mattson . . . invited me to stay at his home over night, and I found him to be a lovable person, unusually well educated for being a farmer. He had by his own efforts acquired enough knowledge of the Greek language so that he could read the New Testament quite well. . . .

"A strange political ferment was at this time becoming noticeable among the people. There had been an exciting election in November. Lincoln was elected president of the United States, but threatening news was emanating from the South, that Lincoln would never sit in the president's chair in Washington. War clouds were gathering on the political horizon, and almost everyone was beginning to ask what this might come to. Even among the pioneers in the great forest there was restlessness and I was often asked what I thought of these rumors of war. The prospect of a war brings about peculiar feelings, among Christians serious feelings. The Christian thinks of it as a divine punishment for sin, and therefore it is an occasion for humiliation and self-examination. However, I do not remember that I noticed any discouragement, but rather a general willingness to bleed and die, if necessary, for a righteous cause. Many of my countrymen whom I visited this winter went to enlist in the Army the next summer and many of them never returned to their humble little homes in the woods.

". . . On Friday, December 7, 1860, I left Scandia at Waconia Lake and drove about seven miles through the woods to Götaholm. This colony was then in its infancy. . . . The Swedes had settled around a little lake called Swede Lake. This lake is about two miles from the village of Watertown. At that time there were, I suppose, about twenty or thirty families living there. . . . Some of them had formerly lived in the vicinity of Jamestown, New York, and Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania. I had been told to go to the home of a pioneer family from Varmland, Olof Anderson's. . . . This man was very interesting to me. He had been a member of parliament in the days of the four estates. . . . But like so many others he had taken the America fever, and that was the reason why I found him in the woods in the north-

eastern corner of Carver county, Minnesota. He lived in comfort, had built a large and roomy log house, with an attractive farmyard and seemed to be in good circumstances for a pioneer. . . . Olof Anderson was for many years a real pillar of this pioneer community and of the congregation there, and people looked up to him as to a father. South of the lake a little log house had been built which for many years was used both as schoolhouse and church. A congregation had been organized by Rev. P. Carlson a couple of years before * and was considered a part of his parish, though it was about twenty miles from East Union.

"From Friday afternoon, December 7, until Wednesday morning, December 12, I stayed in the community and had services every evening, and on Sunday both morning and evening. The services were well attended and the people listened attentively to the sermons. . . .

"I visited at the home of a Mr. Hendricks, south of the lake. His wife was very sick at this time, and I . . . marveled at her patience. I had one article as a remembrance from this home for many years, a lunch box, a little box with a cover, that Mr. Hendricks made for me. In those days it was best to take lunch along when one went on a preaching circuit, for otherwise it was quite likely that one would have to preach on an empty stomach. . . .

"On Wednesday, December 12 I left Götaholm and drove to a place called Camden, which was situated where Buffalo Creek joins Crow River, about ten or twelve miles southwest of Watertown.** Between these two places there was only one claim shanty and that was deserted. Camden consisted of a sawmill and five dwelling houses, all deserted except one. A mile or so to the northwest there was a Norwegian settlement, and that was my destination this day; but because of a slight mistake on my map I took the wrong road and drove three or four miles through the forest towards the southwest. I had to turn back and finally arrived at the Norwegian settlement in the evening.

"A kind hearted Norwegian by the name of Östen Bakken received me into his home and gave me what accommodation he could. He had come from Vardogodh district in Norway, where they do not see the sun for several weeks in winter, and where no crops are raised. I have met not a few people from the northernmost parts of Norway and

* See Chapter 16.

** Camden village has long since disappeared. It was in Camden township, on the western edge of Carver county, about two miles from the present village of New Germany.

Sweden, who never planted as much as a cupful of oats there and yet have become excellent farmers in this country.

"In the woods around Camden there lived about thirty Norwegian families and a few Swedes. True, I had no call to preach to them, but as far as I know there had been no Norwegian pastor called to serve them, and therefore I asked my host if he thought the people would want to come together for a service. He said he would tell his neigh-



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Where Buffalo Creek joins the Crow River (Buffalo Creek at lower edge of picture, Crow River left center, direction of flow towards the right). Here the village of Camden lived its brief life in the 'fifties, and was found deserted by Norelius in December 1860.

bors about it and they could do as they wished. Some of them came the next day and I conducted a service. No one seemed either glad or sorry that I had come, for they were rather indifferent, it seemed. But finally, after they had pondered over the matter quite a while,

they asked me very politely if I would want to come back on Sunday and have services with them. This I promised to do, and on the following day I drove to another place, about ten or twelve miles from there, some five or six miles southeast of Glencoe. When I had gone some distance up Buffalo Creek, I came upon a Sioux Indian encampment consisting of fifteen teepees which almost blocked the road, and I had great difficulty getting past them, since there was thick forest on both sides of the road. No men were to be seen, only women and children, and dogs. As the Arabs call for 'Baksheesh,' so the Sioux Indians clamor for 'Kashtpop' wherever one meets them, especially the women and children. However, I was so fortunate as to get through the camp and finally reached my destination. Most of the people here also were Norwegians, all of them newcomers. Rev. P. Carlson had visited them several times before this, I presume, and I found that they were very

interested in having a congregation organized there. I preached twice and organized a congregation which was called "The Evangelical Lutheran Pontoppidan Congregation," consisting of eight families. They decided to ask Rev. P. Carlson to visit the congregation six times a year.

"On Saturday afternoon I returned to Camden, but it was getting late and it was a very uncomfortable feeling to think of driving through the Indian camp. The Norwegians at Glencoe had told various stories that did not tend to inspire confidence in regard to the savages, and they were said to be especially troublesome when they got hold of liquor. However, there was no way to drive around the camp, so I must go right through it. It was almost dark when I was a couple of miles away from the place. Now one after another of the Indian hunters emerged from the forest on their way home. When they saw me they let out some fearful whoops and by this means they called forth quite a number of their companions from the forest. They all were going to ride on my sleigh and at last I had such a load of Indians that it was all the horse could pull. They talked and yelled and made fun of my blind horse, while I tried to appear as bold and self-confident as possible. It was dark when we came to their camp and there was a terrible noise. I made my way between the teepees the best I could, but here and there I knocked down their poles and other stuff in this tight place. The women scolded, the children shouted for 'kashtpop,' the dogs barked, and the men whooped. It was terrifying, but no one attempted to do me any harm. I was glad to be free from this crowd which was not much to depend on. The same Indians took part in the Indian uprisings in the summer of 1862. According to my promise I stayed in Camden over Sunday and had quite a large audience when I preached. From Camden I went to Young America and then through the woods down to East Union. Now I had tested the blind horse and the heavy sled and I knew that I could get through on passable and impassable roads, wherefore I made an agreement with the owner for the purchase of these necessary means of transportation. My experience had also taught me that I needed a warmer overcoat than the one I had. This need also was met for the time being, for Rev. Carlson let me borrow a home made fur overcoat lined with sheepskin.

...

"Since entering upon my duties I had received as salary \$101.05 in cash and some things *in natura*, worth probably five or six dollars.

This had come in small amounts, a little at a time, from East Union, Chisago Lake, St. Peter, and Scandian Grove, and also from Red Wing, Vasa, and Spring Garden. Rev. Hasselquist had contributed \$16.00. But now the money was gone. I had used it to pay for the horse and sleigh, for a shed which I built for the horse, for fodder, and for a few plain pieces of furniture, and food for the family.

"It seemed that it would be a rather poor Christmas Eve and holiday season, for I had no money with which to buy anything for Christmas, and since I was a newcomer and not known in the city I could get no credit. In the evening, shortly before dark, I went down town and wandered almost aimlessly about the streets, depressed by sad thoughts but with strong crying to the Lord from the depths of my soul. There came into my mind a strong feeling that I ought to go to the post office once more to see if I might not have a letter. I obeyed this inner urge, and sure enough, I got a letter. When I opened it I found that it contained a draft for \$100 from the St. John's Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was a freewill offering that had been lifted for our benefit through the efforts of Dr. Passavant. I cannot describe my feelings, but it certainly strengthened my faith in God who answers prayer when one calls upon Him in poverty and tribulation. . . .

"After having visited and preached in the churches in Goodhue county between Christmas and New Year's, in very cold weather, I set out in January, 1861, on a trip west, through "the Big Woods," to the region now comprising Meeker and Kandiyohi counties. At that time there were no Swedes in Minneapolis, so there was no need to stop and preach there.* From Minneapolis I drove through Wayzata by Lake Minnetonka, and stayed over night with an American who lived in a new log cabin in the neighborhood of where Maple Plain is now. I was given a place to sleep up in the attic, where the daylight could be seen through the cracks between the logs. In the dead of winter such a bedroom is not the most comfortable; but in those days people had an abundance of buffalo robes for their beds, and therefore it was easier to endure the cold than we would now imagine.

"The next day I came to Götaholm, where I stayed over night and conducted services in the evening. From there I drove thirty-seven miles through the woods to Hutchinson. This place consisted of only four or five houses, a hotel, and a sawmill. The weather was extremely cold, and my blind horse had with great difficulty forced his way

* The pioneer pastors set strict nationalistic limitations.

through the deep snow on the almost impassable road. It was a genuine pleasure when I registered at the hotel, but the pleasure was not so great when I was given a room on the second floor, where there was no heat, and only thin board walls to keep out the severe cold. What should I do? To undress in such a room and go to bed with such inadequate covering as was furnished there would have meant certain death. So I went to bed with my outfit on, cap, sheepskin coat, moccasins boots, and at least four pair of stockings. Even so I could hardly stand the cold. In these regions I met no Swedes, but there were quite a few Germans, besides some Frenchmen and Anglo-Americans. At Hutchinson the forest ended and the great plains began.

"The next day, during very cold weather, I continued my journey in a northwesterly direction about twenty miles, via Greenleaf, for the most part without any road, and along towards evening, I came to a Swedish pioneer settlement at Lake Ripley, in the vicinity of the present village of Litchfield. There were not a few of our countrymen. They seemed to have good homes and were fairly well situated. In churchly matters they were sadly divided. Some were Seventh Day Baptists, some regular Baptists, some Methodists, and a few Lutherans. There was not much that I could do. . . . On the west side of the lake there were not a few Swedes and Norwegians who confessed the Lutheran faith. I promised to visit them on my return trip, and this promise I also fulfilled.

. . . .
 "The next day I traveled through deep snow across the prairie to a place then known as Marine Lund, which was in the vicinity of the present village of Grove City. There were woods a few miles in circumference, and within this area there were said to be not less than nine lakes. It was said that twenty Swedish families were living here who were of various religious faiths. There were, for example, some Baptists who insisted that Christ had been born anew for all mankind and that the individual therefore does not need to be regenerated. A Mr. Algren, a Seventh Day Baptist, was very zealous for the law of Moses and the Jewish religion, and talked a great deal about the necessity of circumcision. He had cut whole books out of his Bible and in the New Testament he had deleted various passages and written something else there instead. . . . There were also some Methodists and a few Lutherans, some of whom I knew before. One of these was Peter Lund, who at first had lived at Little Lake in the Chisago Lake com-

munity. Other residents here were Ola Monson and John Larson. . . . I stayed over Sunday in this settlement and conducted services at the home of a Mr. Vilander, because he had the largest house. But Vilander was a Methodist, and on Sunday morning a traveling Methodist minister, Peter Magnus Johnson, appeared there. . . . What was now to be done under the circumstances? Oh yes, Rev. Johnson was very agreeable and virtually considered himself related to the Lutherans, wherefore we decided that I should preach in the forenoon at Vilander's home, and he should hold services in the afternoon at P. Lund's. Everything was calm and peaceful, and finally it turned out that Johnson and I slept in the same bed at Lund's, and thus we had an opportunity to exchange ideas on the important problems of life in a sane and decent way. . . . The people here seemed willing to hear the Word of God. But because of the several different voices that they had heard, they showed lack of determination as to what denomination they wanted to affiliate with. However, a Lutheran congregation came into being there in due time, which still exists and has its church in Grove City. . . .

"On Monday I set out on my journey to go to Monongalia county, as the northern part of Kandiyohi county was called at that time. The provisions in my lunch box had been replenished with some coarse bread and a few pieces of fresh pork. Peter Lund provided me with a compass, for, said he, 'There may be such weather that a compass will be absolutely necessary.' It was really a providential act of God that I got this compass, for otherwise I would have been unable on several occasions to find my way in the snowy wilderness. It was clear and cold in the forenoon, and my journey took me towards the northwest, past Diamond Lake.* Then I came out on Green Lake and drove up to shore at the only place where there was a human habitation at that time. The place was called Columbia and was at about the same spot where the Spicer railroad station now stands. . . .

...
". . . I was told to go northwest from Columbia and about two or three miles from there I was supposed to find a Swede by the name of Erik Pehrson, living near Nest Lake. His land lay between two lakes, the one on the west side being George Lake. My poor, blind horse was completely tired out from going through the deep snow, and I had to stop and let him rest. Meanwhile I climbed the highest hill around

* In Kandiyohi county, northwest of Atwater.

there to see if I could see any human habitation. I found there was a house east of the lake, and to this place I directed my course after my horse was rested. It was Erik Pehrson's home I had found. When I approached the house, Erik Pehrson's mother stood shading her eyes with her hand, wondering greatly who it could be that came riding in this fashion. It must be a Methodist minister, she thought. When I came to the house and told them who I was she was very glad and said in her dialect 'I see my dream is coming true.' She was a sort of seer and had dreamed that a Lutheran minister came there and conducted services according to the old custom. I was given a very hearty welcome to this pioneer settlement. . . .

"Student A. Jackson had been there for some time and had conducted services. He was now in Chicago, studying under Esbjörn in order to prepare himself to be their pastor, and this became a reality the next year. How he and the congregation were driven away from the community in August, 1862, by the ravaging Sioux Indians constitutes an interesting chapter in our pioneer history. Thirteen of our countrymen who were massacred by the Indians at West Lake, in the northwest part of the county, lie buried in the Lutheran cemetery in New London, where the state has erected a suitable monument to their memory.

"After preaching at Per Larson's place in the West Lake community, I visited the Swedes who lived north of 'Rocky Mountain,' where I stayed at the home of Erik Olson and held services. Erik Pehrson's oldest son, Jonas, was my coachman on this trip; but . . . we had great difficulty getting around on account of the deep snow. We arrived late one evening at the home of a pioneer family at Lake Andrew. It was impossible for us to drive any farther and we had to ask for permission to stay there over night. It was a small log cabin, one lone room. It seemed impossible, and the worst of it all was that a number of foxes and wolves and other animals that had been trapped were hanging on the walls and the members of the family were busy skinning the animals. The smell was almost unbearable, but there was nothing to do but suffer it in silence, for we could not sleep out in the snow-drifts.

"The food and the bed were also matters of doubtful quality, but when one is hungry, tired, and cold, the demands will be very few, and one is very thankful just to be alive. It was worse the following morning, when I could see how everything looked. . . . Now I saw how

they made a kind of pancake, thick and heavy, on the dirty stove lids, but how I would be able to get these into a protesting stomach was a ticklish question. The only way was to smear them liberally with a kind of sirup, look at the ceiling, stop thinking, and then swallow. . . .

“ . . . There was a little pioneer colony near Eagle Lake, and this place I visited. Here lived Johannes Backlund, his brother-in-law, Magnus Anderson, also his son-in-law, a Norwegian; one man by the name of Carlson, besides Andreas Peterson, John Lorensen, and others. . . . They were very thankful for my visit, and I felt well repaid for my efforts in plowing through the snow to find them.

“After remaining in this region eight days, during which time I preached every day, I decided to return. It was quite late in the morning when I left West Lake. The weather was fair and not very cold, so I was hoping to get to the Swede Grove community by nightfall. From Green Lake to Diamond Lake one sleigh had gone through, but there it had turned off in another direction and there was not a track in the direction I was to go. I stopped on a hillside to feed my horse and to eat my lunch, and then I set out towards the southeast with the compass as my guide. The snow was deep and it was with great difficulty that the horse plunged through, step by step. I kept on this way all afternoon, the sun went down and darkness came on and there I was, alone on the wild prairie. Yet I was not alone, for God was with me, and I still had faith that He would bring me safely through to some human habitation. But it was hard to keep going in the right direction, for it was so dark that I could not read my compass. The worst of it was that the horse was getting tired, but by letting him rest now and then I was able to continue the journey. Finally I came to a grove and there I found a little house in which some people lived. They could not give me lodging, but I was glad to meet people and get some information as to where I ought to go. There was a lake close by, and they showed me a light on the other side of the lake. ‘Go to that place and they will let you stay,’ was the advice I received. When I got out on the lake there was deep slush or water on the ice under the snow, and I thought I would go to the bottom at once. When I jumped out of the sleigh I sank down to my knees in slush and ice water and my moccasin boots were instantly filled with the slush. However, when I saw that the horse did not go through the ice, I got into the sleigh again and drove directly towards the light that shone on the east side of the lake, and I succeeded in crossing the lake and getting

to the house without any further adventures. To my joy I learned that it was Ola Monson's house in Swede Grove that I had found. The family gave me a hearty welcome, and I had good reason to thank God for helping me on this difficult journey.

"Along towards morning the next day the weather became very stormy, and this continued several days, so I had to stay with my hosts, the Monsons. During this time the nearest neighbors were notified and we met and had a devotional service.

"When the storm had abated a little, I decided to continue my journey across the prairie to the Swedish and Norwegian colony at Lake Ripley, which was about nine or ten miles away. But when I came out on the prairie the storm began to rage again and it was fearful weather to travel in. One could not see more than a couple of rods ahead of the horse and there was no road. In some places there were enormous snow drifts, so the horse got stuck in them, and I had almost incredible labor getting him out. I had, it is true, the compass to go by, but I was so bewildered by the terrific snowstorm that I went by my own feelings instead of depending on the compass. I came to the same place again and again, and finally realized that I was completely lost on the prairie. As yet I was not worried, but the horse was tired out, and therefore I let him stand still and rest as long as he wanted to. When he had stood still quite a while he began to freeze and wanted to go again, and I let him go wherever he pleased. Soon he stopped again, night was coming on, and the storm raged in all its fury. Then I thought I would unhitch the horse, turn the sleigh upside down and crawl under it and stay there over night. But the good horse, blind though he was, seemed to know better than I. He wanted to go again, and I let him proceed just as he wanted to. At last we came up against a fence which made me rejoice, for, thought I, 'Somewhere near here there must be a human dwelling.' And I was right. I came to a house, and although I was not allowed to stay there when I told the people that I was a Lutheran minister, they did show me the way to another house, where I was permitted to stay. The house was a dugout, inhabited by John Peterson and family. It was west of Lake Ripley. . . . The storm continued to rage for several days. It was very cold, and there I was, snowbound for a whole week. Some mornings when we were going to find our way out of the dugout we found the door completely covered with snow, so we had to make a hole through the snowdrift to get out. Never will I forget the hospitality that these peo-

ple showed me, and I have special reason to thank God for saving my life during that terrible storm.

"After being shut in in John Peterson's dugout for almost a week, during which time their food supply almost ran short, the storm finally ceased on Saturday, and the sun came out again. It was strange to experience such a calm, sunny day after the long stormy period when everything seemed so hopeless. Now we could go on skis on the deep snow and invite the neighbors from near and far to come to services in Henry Thorn's large, new stone house, and in the afternoon several people were out with oxen and sleighs to make a road through the enormous drifts. It was really a great pleasure for me to see how these

1 1 1

Why Jackson Came to Minnesota

"In the beginning of July some of the above mentioned Swedish families sold their farms and moved about fifty or sixty miles from there into another state called Minnesota, and as I had heard that there were many Swedes in this state I went with them. I traveled through a part of the country and saw many Swedes and Swedish Congregations, but I did not remain because for the time being there seemed to be less to do than in Wisconsin. In several places they had succeeded in erecting a little church and a school-house and in others they were soon to start building. I returned, however, to Stevens Point and have worked there in a sawmill for a few months this fall. At present I have nothing in particular to do, but a week after New Year's I will move down to the place where I was last winter and teach school for three months; then I intend to go back to Minnesota for I have had letters from there saying that they wish me to come and teach school next spring. When I get there I intend to buy a piece of land for myself and, if this be God's will, to settle down for the rest of my life. Since I came out here among the Swedes my desire to return to the Old Country has almost disappeared. A factor contributing to this has been the scarcity of educated Swedes; hence I have an opportunity to do much good among my countrymen either by keeping school, instructing them in the Scriptures, or reading to them on Sundays, whenever they do not have a pastor."

Letter written by Andrew Jackson December 20, 1858, from Waupaca, Wisconsin, to his brothers and sisters in Sweden. Published in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America* 1924-1925, P. 115-117.



PHOTO COURTESY WILLMAR TRIBUNE

Log Cabin, Kandiyohi County, Erected 1859.

pioneers rejoiced when they could gather for divine services, an opportunity which they seldom had out there on the great prairie in those days. . . .

"In the evening I drove to the home of a Mr. Kjellberg, where I stayed over night. . . . On Monday I set out as early as I could on the journey eastward, towards home. . . . It was about seventy-five miles through the forest, and it took me three days to cover this distance. . . . From the south end of Lake Ripley, the lake that lies close to Litchfield I had about ten miles to the forest. I did not know if a road had been cleared through the woods. There were rumors that a road had been cleared from Mooers Prairie* to the place then known as Rice City, which must have been in the neighborhood of where Darwin is now. I saw no human habitation. It took from nine o'clock in the forenoon until just before sundown for me to work my way through without a road across the prairie to the edge of the forest, and, to my great joy, I succeeded in finding where a road had been cleared, though as yet not a single sleigh had gone through. I presume that the first lake I came to was Lake Washington, and there, as the last rays of the setting sun were fading away, I stopped my blind horse and gave him some

* Near Cokato.

fodder that I had brought along, and also ate my lunch. From there I had at least ten miles to Mooers Prairie, where I arrived late in the evening by the light of the twinkling stars. Here was the first human dwelling that I had seen on the last twenty or twenty-five miles. . . .

"Grateful for the possibility of getting lodgings for cash payment, I continued my journey the following morning, and towards evening I came to the home of a settler who lived a few miles west of where Rockford is now, on the North Crow River. There I spent a most miserable night. The people were French Canadians, very inhospitable. My lunch box was empty, and only after much discussion could I get a couple of raw potatoes. These I sliced and fried on the stove, and this was my supper. I did not get any bed, and I was not permitted to have fire in the fireplace. I therefore lay down flat on a bench with all my clothes on, and tried to dream sweet dreams. But when I thought of my poor horse who stood tied to a tree outside the house, with only a few dry blades of grass which I had picked up along the road to satisfy his hunger, I suffered such sympathy for the poor creature that I could not sleep a wink. These inhospitable people knew, nevertheless, how to charge plenty for the night's lodging. . . .

"From here it took a whole day to get back to St. Paul. Great was the joy when I came home alive and well after having been away more than three weeks, and having gone through many experiences, without any opportunity of sending a letter home. . . .

. . .
"During the summer of 1861 I preached several times at the following places: St. Paul, Afton, Cannon River, Red Wing, Vasa, Marine, Chisago Lake, Taylors Falls, Christiania, and once in Scandian Grove and St. Peter. I also attended the conference meeting in Decorah in the latter part of May, and the synodical meeting in Galesburg in June. Later in the summer troops were being stationed at Fort Snelling to be trained and equipped before being sent south to take part in the war. . . . Quite a number of Swedes were enlisted in the various regiments, including many of the members of our congregations. They decided to have our pastors visit them and preach the Word of God to them. This we tried to do, though it involved not a few difficulties. In the fall I visited Fort Snelling several times. . . . In the Third Regiment there was a company that consisted almost entirely of Swedes, but included a few Norwegians, all of whom were very eager to hear me preach to them. They were encamped together with several thou-

sand other men in tents on an open field, and they were busy drilling. We had no opportunity to gather for divine service during the day, so we had to postpone it until the evening. . . . At a set time in the evening almost the entire Swedish company and also many Swedes from other companies gathered in a plain board shack. A dry goods box was brought in, to serve as pulpit, and a couple of stearin candles were melted fast to the top of it. Some men here and there held candles in their hands. They all stood straight and stiff like real soldiers. Many of them had good voices and some of them were trained hymn singers. A complete service with liturgy was held and it touched my heart deeply to hear how they sang the hymns and the responses with spirit and precision. I tried to make my sermon short, but as appealing as possible, and I dare say that I have never in my life had such an audience, nor ever experienced such emotion when preaching the Word. My listeners were all dressed in uniforms and had a manly and soldierly appearance. They would soon be ready to leave for the scene of war. There was seriousness in their eyes, and one could see that the minds of many, perhaps most of them, were deeply stirred. Outside, all around us, camp fires burned here and there, and there were a thousand various noises such as are heard at any army camp. Some pounded with sticks on the walls of our shanty, others crowed like roosters, some sang silly songs to religious melodies, some offered burlesque prayers to ridicule us, etc., etc. If there had been time to report these disturbers of the peace to their commanding officers, they would have been punished, for after all, religion enjoys protection here in America. But the time did not permit, so we continued our service in cheerful mood, paying no attention to the noises.

"I stayed over night with the two lieutenants in their tent, and slept well on a bundle of straw. The next morning the company was drawn up in double column along the camp street, a couple of hymns were sung, and I conducted morning devotions. After wishing them well and pronouncing the benediction upon them, I bade them a hearty farewell. Many of them I was not to see again in this life."

(Appreciation is hereby expressed to Augustana Book Concern for permission to use quotations from *Early Life of Eric Norelius*.)

The Sioux Uprising in 1862

Though many of the pioneers faced hardship, privation, and suffering, the worst experience that befell any of them was the Sioux outbreak in 1862, when hundreds of settlers were cruelly massacred without warning and without a chance to defend themselves. One parish belonging to the Lutheran Minnesota Conference was decimated and dispersed. It was reorganized four years later and is in existence today as the Lebanon Lutheran Church of New London.

The settlement was a part of the region visited by Norelius on his missionary journey in 1861, in what was then known as Monongalia county, but today forms a part of Kandiyohi county. The very first settlers in that region were Lutheran immigrants from the Scandinavian countries.

The first Swedes came to Eagle Lake in August 1857. Sven H. Backlund, his son Johannes, and Magnus Anderson located on claims August 8. A few days later Andreas L. Sandland and Johan Nilson did likewise. They came by way of Waukesha county, Wisconsin. Others who came to the colony later were Nils Axel Viren, his mother-in-law, Anna Greta Sandstrom, Carl Peter Jonason and son, Carl Johan Carlsson (the two latter with their families came to Eagle Lake directly from Sweden in 1858), Jonas Johnson, Johannes Swenson, and Magnus Kyllerstrom. In the same settlement but over the line in original Kandiyohi county Andrew Nelson and his brother-in-law Swan Swanson located in 1858.

With the very first contingent of Swedes to arrive at Eagle Lake were two Norwegians, Lars and Sever Endreson, who settled on Solomon Lake, four miles west of Eagle Lake. They were joined by Asbjorn (Oscar) Erickson and Lars L. Rosseland.

In 1859 the families of Marcus Johnson, Sr., Marcus Danielson, Anders Olson, and Erick Olson located claims on Green Lake near Columbia. They found the hardbaked gumbo soil of this neighborhood hard to work with their primitive implements so the following year, 1859, they moved to the Lake Prairie region ten miles north, where the soil was a light sandy loam. They were joined later by Anders John-

son, Andrew G. Hillberg, Johannes Dahlbrink, and Peter Johnson. Marcus Johnson had four sons: George, John, Marcus, Jr., and Peter.

Other members of the Waupaca colony had been up into the country scouting about in 1858. In 1859 the following located at Nest Lake, about five miles north of Eagle Lake: Pehr Larson, with four grown sons, Louis, Peter, Oliver, and Nils; Erick Pehrson, with sons John, Peter, Eric, William, and Frederick; Peter Thompson, Sr., with sons Thomas, Göran, Peter, Jr., Andrew, and Olof (Oliver), and a son-in-law, Samuel Stoner. Others to locate at Nest Lake in that first settlement were Nils Törnborn, Otto Broberg, and John Harpman. Mons Olson located on a claim on Crow River near by just a month before the Indian outbreak.

There was a Norwegian contingent in the neighborhood of Lake Prairie, and quite a large Norwegian settlement on the south and west shores of Norway Lake also a few at Lake Johanna in Pope county.

On the extreme western frontier line, six miles west of Norway Lake, a colony of Swedes located. In 1860 four brothers, Johannes, Anders, Gustaf, and Lars Lundborg came. They had been in America two years, and had become somewhat familiar with the frontier life. The following year their father, Andreas L. Lundborg, mother, sister, and a younger brother, Samuel, came directly from their home parish in Sweden. They were followed soon by Daniel Peter Broberg, Anders Peter Broberg, and Sven J. Oman with families. Ole Swenson and family and Johannes Nilson arrived from Sweden about a month before the Indian outbreak.

These scattered settlements, from Lake Ripley in Meeker county to Lake Johanna in Pope county, extended a distance of over fifty miles, and were known by the lakes around which they were clustered. There were no roads or bridges as we now know them. The Pembina trail from Henderson, the fording place on the Minnesota River near St. Peter, over which the half breeds from the north came with their ox-carts loaded with packs of furs on their down trip, and with provisions on their return, extended in a general direction through these settlements. Other trails were blazed to St. Cloud, Kingston mill, and the Lac Qui Parle Indian Agency, and from various settlements. None was improved but they circled around lakes, marshes, hills, and groves and led to the fording places over the streams.

With the colony which arrived from Waupaca in 1858, came a well educated and serious minded young man thirty years of age, Andrew



PHOTO COURTESY WILLMAR TRIBUNE

Map of the Early Settlements in Monongalia (Northern Part of Kandiyohi) County.

Jackson by name, who had been engaged to teach school among the children of these settlers. The following year he came back with the resolve to make his future home here and located a claim.

The visit of an ordained Swedish Lutheran pastor to the settlements was the occasion for much joy among the members. In the summer of 1859 Rev. Peter Carlson of the Union settlement in Carver county made a missionary trip into these settlements. On Friday, July 22, 1859, the settlers were summoned to a meeting in a cabin on the northwest shore of Eagle Lake for a service. Rev. Carlson preached on John 14:6, and the organization of a congregation followed. The preamble to the constitution adopted reads as follows in translation:

"As we Swedish and Norwegian people have located in this vicinity and expect to make it our future home, and as we realize that if our new home is to be truly congenial, our people must continue God fearing, and to foster this requires the preaching of the gospel clear and undefiled and the proper administration of the holy sacraments, we Swedes and Norwegians desire to unite in the organization of a Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation within which the Lutheran faith shall be adopted and acknowledged."

It was decided to apply for membership in the Synod of Northern Illinois, and hopes were expressed that a pastor might be secured. Until such time, occasional visits from clergymen or duly licensed lay preachers would be welcomed. As deacons the school teacher, Andrew Jackson, Johannes Backlund, and Eric Peterson were elected. New Sweden was adopted as a name for the congregation.

The contact with Rev. Carlson when he came on his trips influenced Andrew Jackson to make use of his education in the service of the Lord. As a deacon of the church he was authorized to conduct services. In the summer of 1860 he attended the meeting of the Minnesota Conference at East Union, where he met Eric Norelius and other pastors, and was prevailed upon to attend the theological school at Chicago. His studies there were under the direction of Rev. L. P. Esbjörn. At the meeting of the Synod at Galesburg, Illinois, June 9, 1861, Jackson was ordained. The young pastor hurried back to his friends on the frontier. A few days later he wrote a letter to his sister, Inger Beata in Sweden, in which he describes the conditions in his parish:

"The Swedes in this locality are not well off, but this is not to be wondered at, for when they came here a few years ago this place was

Afskrift af første Sockenstäms protokoll.
Eagle Lake, Monongalia County, Wier.
Den 22 Juli 1859.

Organisation.

Såsom vi Svenskar och Norrkar hafva besatt
oss här i trakten för att göra oss ett hem;
Och för att detta vårt nya hem må bli en rätt
trööstlig så må Gudsfruktan bli en del hos,
Och såsom att jordens goda icke kan stå på sin
ma och leva så litet underhålla en sann
Gudsfruktan, så fördras det att Guds ord blif-
ver predikadt rent och klart, och de Heliga
Sacramenten efter Christi ord och instel-
telso förvaltade våra ibland oss.

Derför vilja vi Svenskar och Norrkar
före ena oss till en församling, Scandinavisk,
Ev. Luthersk, inom hvilketens område den
Lutherska läran skall bli en gallande.

Notet var utlyst, folket samadt,
Predikan hällen öfver Joh. Ev. 14:29. G. af Pastor
Carlson och förhandlingarna företogs.

§5. Församlingens namn blef New Sweden.
Slutades med bön

Uth. supra in fidem, Pet. Carlson
afpl. i just. och uppl. i just. den 24 Juli 1859
Andreas Pettersson, Andreas Lorentson.

PHOTO COURTESY WILLMAR TRIBUNE

Facsimile of Transcribed Minutes Taken at Organization of the New
Sweden Congregation in Monongalia (Kandiyohi) County July 22, 1859.
Signed by Rev. Peter Carlson.

an absolute wilderness; and you realize that it takes time to break new land, to fence it, and to make it into fertile fields.

"... I have been away studying. At present we have our school in a city called Chicago, about one hundred Swedish miles from here. I was there for ten months and at the conference held in the beginning of this month I was ordained a pastor together with four of my schoolmates and I am now at this place as Lutheran pastor. My territory covers an area about one half as large as Tjörn, and I have about one hundred families under my care, so that I can call myself a missionary rather than the pastor of a congregation, but conditions will be better as people move in. We have no church as yet but hope to get one in two or three years; we conduct services in the homes, and frequently I have preached to twenty, thirty, or forty persons on a Sunday morning and then have traveled a Swedish mile in order to preach to a similar number in the afternoon, so you can readily see I live in limited circumstances. I have not yet come to an agreement with the congregation regarding my salary, but we are soon to have a parish meeting about it. . . . Our congregation is called New Sweden and it looks quite a bit like Sweden." (This letter, dated at Columbia, Green Lake P. O., June 29, 1861, was published in the original and in English translation in the *Swedish American Historical Society Publications Volume X*.)

A congregational meeting was held July 10, 1861, at the home of Peter Larson, Sr., at Nest Lake, at which the election of Rev. Jackson as pastor was ratified, the constitution as prescribed by the Augustana Synod was adopted, and the salary of the pastor was fixed at two dollars per communicant. It was decided that the congregation be divided into three separate organizations, to be combined into one parish. No. 1 was to keep the name New Sweden, and was to consist of Eagle Lake and Nest Lake settlements. No. 2 was to be called the Norway Lake parish and consist of the Norway Lake and West Lake settlements. No. 3 was to be called the Lake Prairie congregation and was to consist of the Lake Prairie and adjoining settlements.

On October 26 another congregational meeting was held. It was decided to secure permission to use the abandoned log cabin, which had been built by Andrew Holes, and was most convenient of access to the Eagle Lake and Nest Lake settlements. Arrangements were made to remodel the building for use as a church.

Instruction of a confirmation class was begun at once by the pastor.



PHOTO COURTESY WILLMAR TRIBUNE

Rev. and Mrs. Andrew Jackson

In some of the families which had left Sweden some nine or ten years before, children had grown into manhood and womanhood without having been confirmed in the faith and admitted to the Lord's Supper. These husky young frontier men and women must now study the catechism early and late in order to be prepared to pass a satisfactory examination. On November 17, 1861, the first confirmation service took place at the improvised church. This class of nineteen included members from every one of the congregations in the parish, and two from Meeker county.

At the annual meeting of the New Sweden congregation held May 28, 1862, it was decided that the parish was still too extended, the members living in an area of over twelve miles in length, so it was again divided. The northern part was called the Nest Lake congregation and the southern part Eagle Lake. This meeting was destined to be the last, as far as the Eagle Lake congregation was concerned. In August 1862 Indians overran these settlements, killing and wounding many, and dispersing the members. The total membership of the con-

gregations before the Indian outbreak, was: New Sweden 103; Lake Prairie 55, and Norway Lake 45, a total of 203 persons.

Rev. Jackson had two services arranged for in his Norway Lake parish on Wednesday, the 20th of August, 1862. In the forenoon a meeting was held at the Lundborg cabin at West Lake. Here a new contingent of people had just arrived from Sweden and were bid welcome. There was an air of joyous expectancy, for a wedding was to be held within a few days, preparations for which were being made in true old country style.

At the close of the service a little boy, Peter Broberg, came running all out of breath and told that the Indians had arrived at the Broberg cabins about two miles away, and that they were abusing the children that had been left at home. The visit of Indians was nothing new, and no particular alarm was felt. Anders P. Broberg and the four Lundborg brothers, however, started at once for the Broberg cabins by a short cut through the woods and over the meadow along the lakes. Daniel Broberg placed the women and children in a wagon hitched to an ox team and took the regular prairie trail for home. The good pastor warned the Lundborg boys to leave their guns behind so as not unnecessarily to provoke the Indians, which they did. Accounts of the tragedy do not agree upon this detail, as most assert that the boys nevertheless did take their rifles. Mr. A. P. Oman, who as a boy was an eyewitness, said that the boys did not have their guns.

Anders Broberg and the Lundborg boys arrived at the cabin and found the band of Indians there, all of whom were known and familiar to them. They pretended to be on a friendly errand, greeting and chatting with them. All at once the Indians at some prearranged signal gave simultaneous fire, killing A. P. Broberg where he sat at ease at the table in his cabin. Johannes Nilson, a half brother of Mrs. Broberg, and four small children were slaughtered in the cabin or in the yard as they tried to escape. Anders, Gustaf, and Lars Lundborg were all shot and killed. Their younger brother, Samuel, was also shot and received a bad wound. He fell to the ground and so successfully pretended to be dead, that the attacking Indian, after rifling his pockets and striking him with the butt of his gun, left him. He escaped and lived for many years thereafter.

The elder Lundborg came into sight just in time to see his boys shot down. He had his gun, but seeing the futility of trying to cope with so many enemies, turned and fled into the brush. The Indians

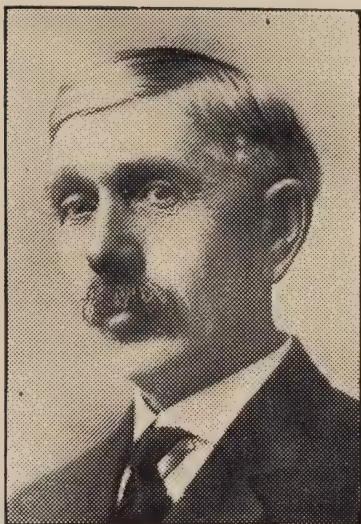


PHOTO COURTESY WILLMAR TRIBUNE

*Peter Broberg, only survivor of the D. P. Broberg family
Anna Stina (Broberg) Peterson, only survivor of the A. P. Broberg family*

fired several shots after him, but just then Daniel Broberg and the women and children in the wagon caught the eyes of the savages and they abandoned the chase of the elder Lundborg and started for the wagon. They shot Daniel, who was driving his oxen, and an Indian leaped up into the wagon. The two wives of the Brobergs jumped from the wagon and ran for their lives, but were caught by the savages and tomahawked. Mrs. A. P. Broberg clung to her ten months old baby boy, John Albert, but the redskins had no pity for women and children. Mrs. D. P. Broberg, two daughters, and little Peter Broberg also jumped from the wagon and made a break for the woods.

Only one member of each of the two Broberg families escaped alive from the terrible massacre, Anna Stina from the A. P. Broberg family and Peter from the D. P. Broberg family.

The pastor had left without knowing about the terrible tragedy which had befallen his parishioners at West Lake. The second service of the day was in progress at the home of Thomas Osmundson, on the shore of Norway Lake, when Johannes, the eldest son of the Lundborg's, arrived with the terrible news. The meeting came to a sudden

close. The pastor drove his horse at utmost speed to warn the Nest Lake settlers, so that by night these were all gathered at Adams place at George Lake, and at early dawn the next day set out for Forest City. They were joined by the Eagle Lake settlers, and made a large cavalcade.

When near the eastern boundary of Monongalia county a band of Indians rode out from the Diamond Lake woods to attack them. There was a hurried placing of wagons in a circle on a hilltop, and anyone with any kind of tool or pan started to dig trenches for protection against the hostile bullets. There was an indescribable panic of the crying, praying, and defenseless people. Luckily there were some old seasoned frontiersmen in the party, William Kouts and Silas Foot, both had their trusty rifles and both were skilled marksmen. They deployed themselves outside of the corral, and were able to kill one Indian pony and wound one of the Indians. The Indians continued to ride around the corral but at a safe distance from the trusty rifles of the frontiersmen.

A terrible scene was enacted in plain view of the whole party. Two of the Eagle Lake settlers, Grandfather Sven Helgeson Backlund, seventy-five years of age, and Andreas Lorentson Sandland, fifty-six years, had been bringing up the rear with the cattle. They did not seem to realize their danger, but were trying to bring in the cattle in spite of the urging to abandon them and hurry to the corral. The Indians killed them, and mutilated their bodies in the most savage fashion, evidently with the idea of striking terror to the people in the corral. After riding around the corral for several hours the Indians tired of the attempt and left, giving the settlers a chance to make the run to Forest City, where they arrived in safety.

Meanwhile bloody scenes had been enacted at isolated cabins along the frontier farther south. Lars Iverson at Crook Lake was killed in the meadow where he was mowing hay. His family escaped in the woods and eventually made their way to Paynesville and St. Cloud.

At Solomon Lake, Lars Endreson was killed while mowing grass near his cabin. His son Endre was shot while picking potatoes for dinner, and his son Ole was wounded and left for dead. Two daughters were taken captive by the Indians and carried away with all the spoils which the Indians could find. The mother, Guri Endreson, with her little daughter Anna clasped to her bosom, managed to hide in an outdoor cellar and escape notice of the Indians.

Another band of Indians arrived on the evening of the 19th to attack the Eagle Lake settlement. They too were well known to the settlers. In the early evening they arrived at the cabin of Berger Thorson, a Norwegian bachelor, who had lived by himself in a cabin on a hill within what are now the limits of the city of Willmar. They dispatched him with a tomahawk so no shot might disturb the settlers across the lake. Along about dusk they rode up past where the State Hospital now is. The Foot Lake settlers had been warned by a messenger from Forest City, and had made a start north. They concluded to stay overnight at the cabin of Oscar Erickson on the Eagle Lake Creek. Solomon Foot and family, Swan Swanson and family, Oscar Erickson and family, C. J. Carlson and family, and the latter's father, Carl Peter Jonason, and wife, were gathered there. Andrew Nelson, a brother-in-law of Swan Swanson, was bringing up the cattle near the abandoned Foot cabin and was trying to get the cattle out of Foot's cornfield when the Indians rode up. They rode in among the cattle, but Andrew escaped and jumped down the bank of Swan Lake into the water. During the night he made his way across the prairie to Diamond Lake and accompanied the Diamond Lake and Green Lake settlers to Forest City, where he was instrumental in getting a relief party sent out a few days later.

The Indians arrived at the Erickson cabin and pretended to be friendly. Foot told them that there were stories afloat about their being on the warpath and warned them to stay away from the cabin. They camped over night by the creek. Foot was a marksman whose skill with the rifle was well known to the Indians, and none of them cared to be his victim. He sat on guard all night with his dog, who would growl if the Indians stirred about. Old man Jonason, sixty-nine years old, thought the cabin was too close for comfort, so went down to the lake, where there were several abandoned cabins, to sleep during the night.

In the morning the Indians came up to the cabin and asked for potatoes. Foot showed them the patch and the hoe, and told them to dig them for themselves. Carl Carlson thought it was a poor policy to refuse them potatoes, so volunteered to go out and dig them. The Indians by this time had almost convinced Foot that they were an ordinary hunting party, and when one he knew well came up to the zigzag rail fence which surrounded the cabin and asked for an interview, he went out to meet him. But the moment he met the eyes of the

Indian he saw there was murder in them, and wheeled about to get back to the cabin.

The Indian had a gun hidden under his blanket and instantly whipping it into position he shot Foot in the back with a charge of buckshot. Foot succeeded in getting into the cabin, and before the Indians could get under cover he had shot three of them. At the very instant that Foot was fired at, Carl Carlson was killed in the potato patch, and fell on his face with a potato in his hand. In the meadow some distance away his father was shot as he was coming back from his night's lodging at Eagle Lake.

Erickson and Foot continued to shoot from the cabin whenever they could see something to fire at; but the Indians continued to fire at the cabin from cover, and succeeded in disabling both these marksmen, Foot with a bullet through his chest, and Erickson with one through his groin. The women continued to shoot at intervals to make the Indians believe that the defenders were still on guard. Thinking that they were losing valuable time in getting the Eagle Lake settlers, the Indians abandoned the siege of the cabin and moved, evidently intending to come back later and complete their work. Swan Swanson then took his wife and children and went back to hide in the woods on the lake near his home cabin, where he had a very narrow escape from capture a few days later. Eventually he made his way to Paynesville, travelling under cover of the woods, and was picked up, with his wife and children, by scouts.

The wounded men in the cabin induced the remaining women and children to hide in the woods, and under cover of the same go to get help at Green Lake, where Foot was confident the settlers would make a stand under the protection of Arnold's blockhouse. The women made their way to Green Lake but found the blockhouse in ashes. They were later picked up by a scouting party from Forest City.

The two wounded men continued to lie in the cabin through two hot August days. On the third day they were rescued by good Mother Guri Endreson, who came with her wounded son Ole and little babe Anna, with two steers hitched to a sled loaded with some of the effects which the Indians had not taken from the Solomon Lake house. Foot's wagon had stood so near the cabin that the Indians had not dared to take it. Mrs. Endreson hitched her steers to the wagon; filled it with hay, washed the wounded men and changed clothing on them, helped them into the wagon, took what things she could from the cabin, and

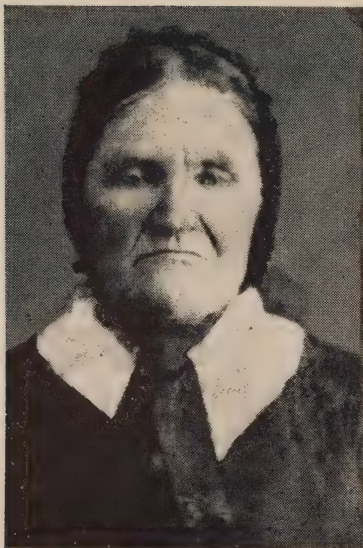


PHOTO COURTESY WILLMAR TRIBUNE

Guri Endreson, "Heroine of Kandiyohi County."

*Mrs. Brita Stina Backlund, one of the survivors of the Sioux Uprising.
Her husband, Sven H. Backlund, was killed by the Indians.*

brought her precious load safely to Forest City, a distance of thirty-five miles across the wild prairie, all the time in utmost danger of being seen by hostile Indians. She had spread sheets over her dead husband and son before leaving home, and placed pillows under their heads, as they were found by Captain Whitcomb's burial party. One can scarcely imagine her joy when she found her two daughters unharmed at Forest City. They had escaped from their captors, hid in the woods, and had been picked up by scouts near the Kandiyohi Lakes. The heroic conduct of the Viking mother in the face of overwhelming grief and greater danger has earned for her the title of heroine of Kandiyohi county, and the state of Minnesota has honored her memory by a monument erected over her grave at the Solomon Lake churchyard. Guri Endreson was a member of the early Eagle Lake congregation and the record of her family may be found in the old church records kept by Rev. Jackson. The daughter Guri, one of those captured by the Indians, was a member of the first confirmation class.

Most of the young men of the Nest Lake and Eagle Lake settle-

ments had been absent from home, working in the harvest and threshing in the older settlements at Monticello, Anoka, and other places. They met the refugees as they came from Forest City, and a number of them went to St. Cloud. Here Rev. Jackson organized a party of twenty-one young men of the settlements, mounted on horses, and with four wagons made a trip back to the abandoned settlements. They were successful in picking up about a hundred head of cattle, some horses, as much household goods as they could haul, and returned unharmed although they had some narrow escapes from brushes with the hostiles.

The survivors were located throughout the settlements of Goodhue and Carver counties, and other places, where they remained until it was again safe to venture back to the abandoned claims. The Eagle Lake settlers never returned there to live, and the West Lake settlement had been wiped out.

The "heroine," Guri Endreson, when she arrived at Forest City, did not immediately sit down to write the story of what she had done. Her old mother was still living back in Norway, and one of her daughters had stayed there. But Guri Endreson did not write and tell them about the stirring events of those August days in 1862 until in December 1866, and then she was back in Monongalia county, not on her own farm, but living with some other people two and a half miles from where she saw her husband and her son shot by Indians. And she seems to have forgotten entirely that she helped anyone. Instead she writes that they helped her.

The letter of Guri Endreson to her relatives in Norway was seen and transcribed and a photostatic copy made by Dr. Theodore C. Ble-gen of the Minnesota Historical Society, and was translated by him and published in *Minnesota History*. The letter reveals her as a woman of heroism and humble faith, who not only could act in a time of critical danger, but who could go back to the daily chores of milking cows and making butter, and even encourage her daughter to move to America.

The letter reads as follows:

Harrison P. O.

Minn. Dec. 2, 1866

Dear Daughter and your husband and children, and my beloved mother:

I have received your letter of April 14, this year, and I send you herewith my heartiest thanks for it, for it gives me great happiness to hear from you and to know that you are alive, well, and in general

thriving. I must also report briefly to you how things have been going with me recently, though I must ask you to forgive me for not having told you earlier about my fate. I do not seem to have been able to do so much as to write to you, because during the time when the savages raged so fearfully here I was not able to think about anything except being murdered, with my whole family, by these terrible heathen. But God be praised I escaped with my life, unharmed by them, and my four daughters also came through the danger unscathed. Guri and Britha were carried off by the wild Indians, but they got a chance next day to make their escape; when the savages gave them permission to go home to get some food, these young girls made use of the opportunity to flee and thus they got away alive, and on the third day after they had been taken, some Americans came along who found them on a large plain or prairie and brought them to people. I myself wandered aimlessly around on my land with my youngest daughter and I had to look on while they shot my precious husband dead, and in my sight my dear son Ole was shot through the shoulder. But he got well again from this wound and lived a little more than a year and then was taken sick and died. We also found my oldest son Endre shot dead, but I did not see the firing of this death shot. For two days and nights I hovered about there with my little daughter, between fear and hope and almost crazy, before I found my wounded son and a couple of other persons, unhurt, who helped us to get away to a place of more security.*

To be an eye witness to these things and to see many others wounded and killed was almost too much for a poor woman, but, God be thanked, I kept my life and my sanity, though all my movable property was torn away and stolen. But this would have been nothing if only I could have had my loved husband and children—but what shall I say?—God permitted it to happen thus, and I had to accept my

* Note by Blegen: Solomon R. Foot, one of the two men whose rescue under heroic circumstances is attributed to Guri Endreson, tells the story himself in great detail in Lawson, Tew, and Nelson, *Kandiyohi County*, 106–110. He like his comrade, Oscar Erickson, had been badly wounded. Of Mrs. Endreson he writes: "She washed our bodies, bandaged our wounds and gave us every possible comfort. Fortunately my wagon stood so near the cabin that the Indians had not ventured to take it. She drew this as near the door as possible, put into it bedding, blankets and other things we might need. She assisted us into it, propped us up in a half reclining position, placed my gun by my side, hitched the young unbroken oxen to it and started." "At night Mother Endreson supplied all our wants and again bathed our wounds" and she "spent a sleepless night watching over us, ever on the lookout for the savage foe." (In view of this evidence, Guri Endreson's statement that she found two persons, unhurt, who helped her to escape, seems inexplicable.)

heavy fate and thank Him for having spared my life and those of some of my dear children.

I must also let you know that my daughter Gjaertru has land, which they received from the government under a law that has been passed, called in our language "The Homestead Law," and for a quarter section of land they have to pay sixteen dollars, and after they have lived there five years they receive a deed and complete possession of the property and can sell it if they want to or keep it if they want to. She lives about twenty-four American miles from here and is doing well. My daughter Guri is away in house service for an American about a hundred miles from here; she has been there working for the same man for four years; she is in good health and is doing well; I visited her recently, but for a long time I knew nothing about her, whether she was alive or not.

My other two daughters, Britha and Anna, are at home with me, are in health, and are thriving here. I must also remark that it was four years last August 21 since I had to flee from my dear home, and since that time I have not been on my land, as it is only a sad sight because at the spot where I had a happy home there are now only ruins and remains left as reminders of the terrible Indians. Still I moved up here to the neighborhood again this summer. A number of families have moved back here again so that we hope after a while to make conditions pleasant once more.*

Yet the atrocities of the Indians are and will be fresh in memory; they have now been driven beyond the boundaries of the state and we hope that they will never be allowed to come here again. I am now staying at the home of Sjur Anderson, two and a half miles from my home. I must also tell you how much I had before I was ruined in this way. I had seventeen head of cattle, eight sheep, eight pigs, and a number of chickens; now I have six head of cattle, four sheep, one pig; five of my cattle stayed on my land until in February, 1863, and lived on some hay and stacks of wheat on the land; and I received compensation from the government for my cattle, and other movable property that I lost. Of the six cattle that I now have three are milk cows and of these I have sold butter, the summer's product, a little over two hundred and thirty pounds; I sold this last month and got sixty-

* Note by Blegen: "The resumption of farming in this region started on a small scale in 1864. 'In the summer of 1864 a few settlers ventured beyond the soldiers' patrol lines into Kandiyohi county, where they sowed and harvested a crop during the summer.'" Lawson, Tew, and Nelson, *Kandiyohi County*, 33.

six dollars for it. In general I may say that one or another has advised me to sell my land, but I would rather keep it for a time yet in the hope that some of my people might come and use it; it is difficult to get such good land again, and if you, my dear daughter, would come here, you could buy it and use it and then it would not be necessary to let it fall into the hands of strangers. And now in closing I must send my very warm greetings to my unforgettable, dear mother, my dearest daughter and her husband and children, and in general to all my relatives, acquaintances and friends. And may the Lord by His grace bend, direct, and govern our hearts so that we some time with gladness may assemble with God in the eternal mansions where there will be no more partings, no sorrows, no more trials, but everlasting joy and gladness, and contentment in beholding God's face. If this be the goal for all our endeavors through the sorrows and cares of this life, then through His grace we may hope for a blessed life hereafter for Jesus' sake.

Always your devoted

Guri Olsdotter*

As more and more of the settlers returned and new ones came, beginning in 1864 and 1865, Rev. Jackson came to visit them from where he was then stationed at St. Ansgar's Academy in East Union to care once more for their spiritual needs. On July 31, 1865, the Nest Lake congregation held a meeting, called by Rev. Jackson. After devotional exercises a number of new members were admitted. The matter of providing a house of worship was taken up at a meeting held February 2, 1866. It was decided to build a house twenty by twenty-four feet, eight and one half feet high. Everyone interested was to bring five logs twenty feet long and three logs twenty-four feet long. This log church was completed the same year, and was used until 1872. It stood in the country two miles west of the village of New London. In that church the Minnesota Conference held its tenth anniversary convention in 1868. On May 20, 1866, the congregation had a meeting under Jackson's leadership and voted to notify the Augustana Synod that the congregation had been reorganized and again wanted to have membership in the Synod.

* Letter translated by Theodore C. Blegen from original in possession of Mr. Arne Larsen Rosseland of Kvan, Hardanger, Norway, and published in *Minnesota History* December 1929, Pp. 425-430. It was also published in Blegen, *Grass Roots History* (University of Minnesota Press, 1947), Pp. 77-80. Permission for publication here has been granted by Dr. Blegen and the Minnesota Historical Society.

In 1867 Rev. T. H. Dahl was called to serve as pastor. He moved the following year, and after several unsuccessful attempts to get a pastor, Rev. J. P. Lundblad accepted a call in 1869. During his pastorate there was a bitter struggle about moving the church location to New London. A new church was built in the village in 1873, and the following year Erik Hedeén succeeded Lundblad as pastor of the congregation.

The legislature of Minnesota authorized the moving of the remains of the thirteen victims of the massacre at West Lake to the churchyard at New London and on August 20, 1891, erected a monument to perpetuate the memory of these victims.

The people living in the neighborhood of where the West Lake massacre took place, not far from the village of Sunburg, in 1927 formed an organization known as the Monson Lake Memorial Association and through the efforts of its members a State Memorial Park was established in 1937 by the State of Minnesota on the scene of the massacre. Annual observances are held there.

(Most of the material in this chapter is taken from the writings of Dr. Victor E. Lawson, Willmar, Minnesota. His *History of Kandiyohi County* contains an extensive account of the Indian massacres in that region. Shorter summaries of this account appear in *The Beginnings and Progress of Minnesota Conference* and in *Anniversary Album Lebanon Lutheran Church, New London*, 1944. Dr. Lawson has granted permission for use of this material.)



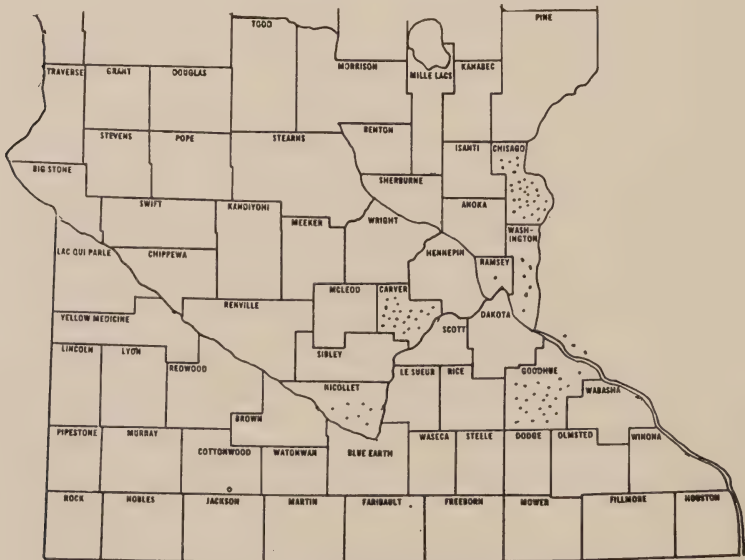
PHOTO COURTESY
WILLMAR TRIBUNE

Victor E. Lawson,
editor,
civic leader,
historian of
Kandiyohi County

Home Missions, 1863-1870

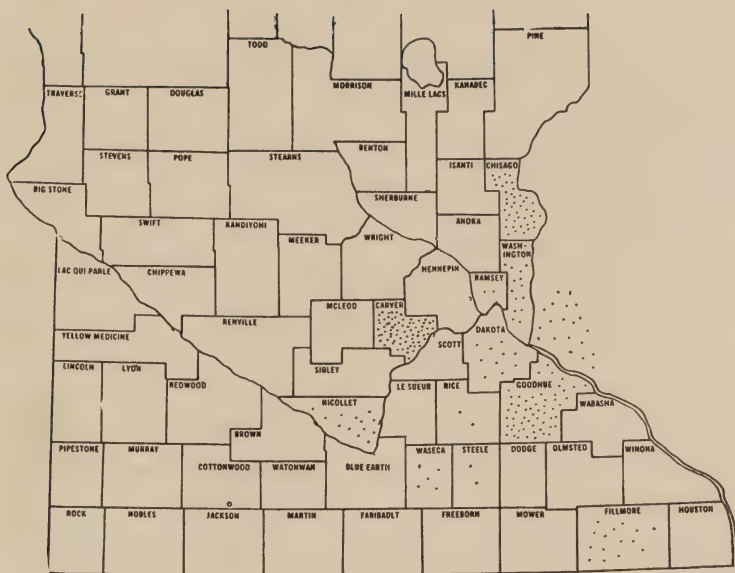
The number of pastors in the Minnesota Conference at the beginning of 1860 was five: P. A. Cederstam, serving Scandian Grove and St. Peter; Peter Carlson, at East and West Union and other churches in Carver county; Peter Beckman at Spring Garden and Cannon River, in Goodhue county; J. P. C. Boren at Red Wing and Vasa; and C. A. Hedengran at Chisago Lake and the surrounding regions.

When the Augustana Synod was organized in June 1860 the following Norwegian Lutheran pastors were added to the Minnesota Conference: A. Scheie, Newburg, Fillmore county; Nils Olsen, Christianity, Dakota county; P. Asbjörnson, Decorah, Iowa; L. H. Norem, Bostwick Valley, Wisconsin; and O. Sheldahl, Cambridge, Iowa. Of this group, only one attended Conference meetings regularly. This was



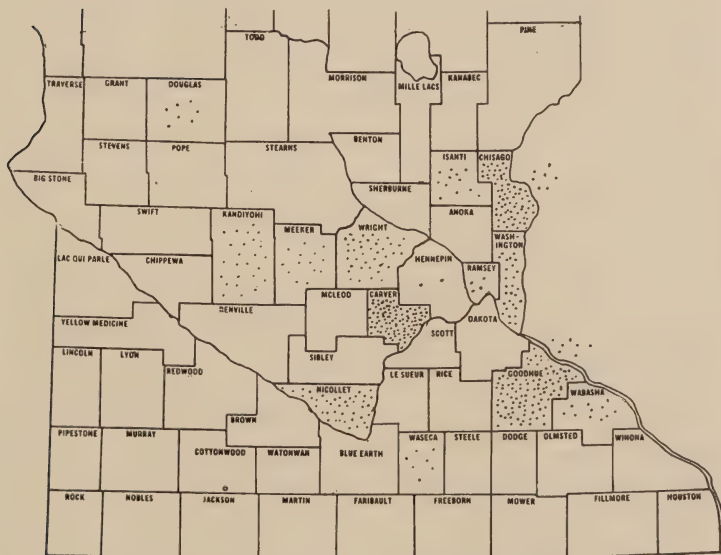
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Minnesota Conference 1858. Each dot Represents Ten Communicant Members.



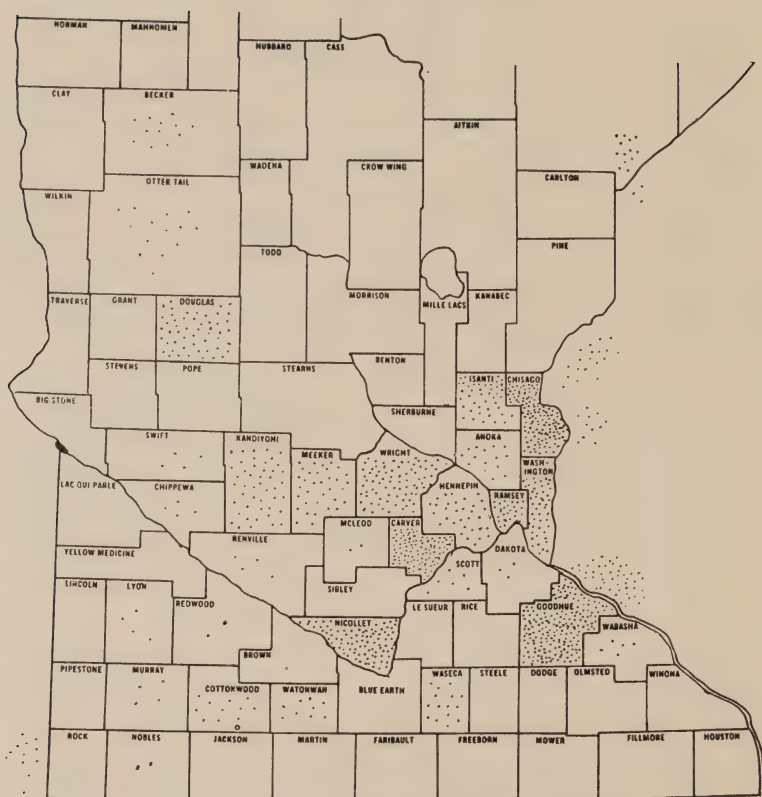
OUTLINE MAP COURTESY HUDSON MAP CO.

*Minnesota Conference 1865. Each dot represents
Ten Communicant Members.*



OUTLINE MAP COURTESY HUDSON MAP CO.

*Minnesota Conference 1870 Each dot represents
Ten Communicant Members.*



OUTLINE MAP COURTESY HUDSON MAP CO.

*Minnesota Conference 1875. Each dot represents
Ten Communicant Members.*

Rev. N. Olsen. He served as Conference president once and as secretary once, and was on the board of directors of the Conference school for several years. Norem attended Conference meetings twice and served as president one time. The others attended only one meeting, the one held in the Norwegian Lutheran church at Decorah, Iowa, in May 1861. Two new men entered the Conference later, T. H. Dahl in 1867 and Ola Paulson in 1868. They were regular in attendance and active participants in the Conference work, Dahl serving as secretary one term, and Paulson serving as president one term and as secretary one term. On two occasions the Conference adopted resolutions deploring

the lack of interest on the part of the majority of Norwegian members. In 1864 the Conference asked the Synod whether those members who never attended meetings should still be considered as members of the Conference. In response to this question the Synod established the La Crosse Conference to include the congregations in western Wisconsin, northern Iowa, and southern Minnesota. Most of the Norwegian congregations were in this territory. Olsen's congregation in Dakota county was the only one of that group remaining in the Conference, except for the parishes in Monongalia (Kandiyohi) county which had been dispersed by the Sioux outbreak and were reorganized later.

In 1870 the Synod was divided along nationalistic lines and the Norwegians formed their own organization.

During the decade of the 'sixties the ranks of the Minnesota Conference ministerium were strengthened by the coming of Eric Norelius in 1860 as travelling missionary and pastor in St. Paul for one year and then as pastor in Vasa; Andrew Jackson in 1861 to the New Sweden parish and the mission field in Monongalia (Kandiyohi) county; J. Pehrson in 1862 to Marine, later to St. Peter; A. Lindholm in 1864 to Marine (moved to Illinois the following year); J. S. Nilson in 1866 to Watertown; and J. P. Lundblad to Marine (moved in 1869 to Nest Lake, the reorganized New Sweden church, now Lebanon, New London); J. G. Lagerstrom in 1869 to Mooers Prairie, Wright county; Peter Sjöblom to Red Wing; and L. O. Lindh to Marine.

At the beginning of the year 1870 the Minnesota Conference had fifteen pastors. Three of these were Norwegians who withdrew during the year, but three new pastors came into the Conference in the fall of 1870: J. Magny to Vasa (assistant pastor); J. Auslund to Cambridge; and J. O. Cavallin to Cannon Falls.

After the division of the Synod in 1870, the Minnesota Conference had forty-nine congregations, with a communicant membership of 5,797, served by fifteen pastors. As already mentioned, the only congregation organized during the Civil War was the one in Cambridge. In the years 1866 to 1870 seventeen congregations were organized, and many of the existing congregations experienced a rapid growth. In 1870 Chisago Lake had 705 members, Vasa 576, Red Wing 358, East Union 452, West Union 336. The city congregations were still very small. St. Paul had only eighty-one communicants. Augustana, Minneapolis, did not report for that year but in 1871 they had ninety communicants.

The specific areas of greatest home mission activity in the period following the Civil War were Meeker and Kandiyohi counties, Douglas county and the surrounding regions, and Burnett and Polk counties in Wisconsin. Other areas were being explored and investigated and in the early 'seventies the outreach was extended to the Sioux Falls area in Dakota Territory, to Duluth and Superior and other northern Minnesota points, and down the Red River Valley.

Congregations organized in 1866 were Augustana, Minneapolis; Mooers Prairie (Salem, Cokato); Carlslund, Buffalo; and Oscars Lake, Douglas county (the first congregation in what is now the Red River Valley Conference). In 1867 a congregation was organized at Fish Lake, near Harris, in Chisago county. In 1868 the Tripolis congregation near Willmar came into existence, and the Swede Grove (Grove City) church was reorganized. In 1869 four small congregations were organized in the Goodhue district: Lake City, Long Creek, Goodhue, and Minneiska. The same year Beckville, Meeker county, and Mamre-lund, Pennock, were organized. In 1870 a long list of new congregations sprang into being: Cokato and North Crow River in Wright county; Rush Lake (Rush Point) in Chisago county; Brush Prairie in McLeod county; Genessee (Atwater) in Kandiyohi county; Trade Lake in Burnett county, Wisconsin; Duluth, Superior, and Thomson in the Lake Superior area.

The establishment of new churches in the Minnesota Conference in the 'sixties follows the trend of immigration for the period. During the years of the war the stream of immigration was a mere trickle, but in 1866 there were 4,466 persons who left Sweden for the United States; in 1867, 5,893; in 1868, 21,472; and in 1869, 32,050 (Hildebrand, *Svenskarna i Amerika* I). The increase in immigration from Sweden to Minnesota was no accident. After the Civil War the State of Minnesota sent Hans Mattson to Scandinavia as its emigration agent. The homestead law of 1864 offered free land. Railroad lines were being extended. In 1866 Minnesota had 105 miles of railroad, owned by five different companies, no company having more than twenty-six miles of railroad in operation. In 1867 114 miles of railroad were built, and this included a connection to Chicago via McGregor, Iowa, and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. In 1868 131 miles were completed, in 1869 206 miles, making a total of 750 miles of railroad in the state at the end of the 'sixties. In 1870 a line was completed between St. Paul and Duluth and from Duluth to Brainerd. Other lines radiated out from St

Paul to St. Cloud, from St. Paul to Mankato, from St. Paul to Austin, and the longest one of all, extending from St. Paul through Minneapolis out through Wright, Meeker, Kandiyohi, Swift, and into Stevens county. This was the St. Paul and Pacific, forerunner of the Great Northern. In 1871 it reached the western border of the state at Breckenridge.

The railroads were interested in getting people to settle in their territory, and often carried on extensive advertising campaigns in Europe, even cooperating with the state immigration agents. The St. Paul and Pacific and the Northern Pacific built houses to provide temporary lodgings for newly arrived immigrants in St. Paul, Duluth, Litchfield, and other places. The Northern Pacific helped to organize colonization projects.

Land companies carried on organized campaigns to bring settlers from abroad. Typical of these was the Great European American Emigration Land Company. A booklet advertising its land around St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin, was published in Swedish in 1869. Description of the place reads as follows (in translation):

"The city of St. Croix Falls is located on the St. Croix River, which forms the boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota and is a tributary of the Mississippi River. The St. Croix River is navigable from this place southward, whereby water communication is possible all the way to New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico. Several steamboats are already making use of this facility. The city has a scenic location, and the company owns the land on both sides of the river, also a landing wharf, several buildings including hotel, warehouses, and mill. Within the city the river has a fall of eighteen feet, and by means of a newly constructed dam there is water power sufficient for the establishment of many large factories. In 1868 the population was about 450. The Lake Superior and St. Croix Railroad Company already has twenty miles of its railroad surveyed, and several other railroad companies in the vicinity are either being planned or already being built. A canal between Lake Superior and St. Croix Falls is also being considered, and will become a reality within a short time, since it is easy to see the enormous advantage of a direct means of shipping from Lake Superior to New Orleans. St. Croix Falls is the natural shipping point for timber and wood from the northern part of Minnesota and the northwestern part of Wisconsin to the states farther south along the Mississippi, which are lacking in forests. Furthermore, this city

will become the main point for all other business for the above mentioned parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin, wherefore it requires no special foresight, but only knowledge of how a well situated town in America develops rapidly, to see that St. Croix Falls must flourish and become a populous and important manufacturing and commercial city, and that as a consequence mechanics and merchants who settle there can count on good business and profits. The company intends to place a Lutheran pastor there this year. A school is already in existence." (H. A. Taube, *Upplysningar För Utvandrare Till Amerika* in library of Minnesota Historical Society.)

St. Croix Falls did not become a great city, as was optimistically foretold. No canal was built between that place and Duluth. No Lutheran pastor was placed by the company. But we see the methods used in winning emigrants in Sweden at a time when crop failure and other hardships brought many to the point of starvation.

Cambridge and Fish Lake

The Rum River drains the overflow from Lake Mille Lacs into the Mississippi River. In doing so it does not take the shortest route, but makes a twenty mile bend eastward, besides many meanderings of a mile or so. Along the banks of the Rum River there was white pine when the first lumber men came, and there were those who realized its value. Before the boundaries of Wisconsin were established in 1848 enthusiastic Wisconsin patriots wanted to draw the western border of their state from the mouth of the St. Louis River to the mouth of the Rum, then down along the Mississippi. This would have given to Wisconsin a large chunk of the best white pine region, all of Washington county and most of Ramsey, parts of Chisago, Anoka, Isanti, Pine, Carlton, and Hennepin counties, the major part of St. Paul and a large portion of Minneapolis.

Congress decreed that the St. Croix should be the state boundary. Consequently the entire Rum River valley was left to Minnesota. Lumbering began in the valley of the Rum in the 1840's. Thousands of logs found their way down to the sawmills at Anoka and Minneapolis. The lumber camps created a demand for farm products and thus gave impetus to settlement and farming. The first settlers in the region were Americans, but most of them left after a few years.

At the "elbow" of the Rum River, its easternmost point, in Isanti county, a new little village, Cambridge, sprouted from the wilderness in the 'fifties. The first settlers came from Chisago Lake. Several of them were Baptists. Others of their faith arrived from Vasa and from various points in the state, as well as from Sweden. A Baptist congregation was organized in 1860. Among the leaders in this group were some of the relatives of Eric Norelius.

One of the earliest Lutheran settlers at Cambridge was Per Anderson, "Minnesota's first Lutheran layman." He was the leader of the original group of settlers at Chisago Lake (Chapter 3). He was a man who loved the woods and preferred to see plenty of fish and game rather than open fields and much people. Perhaps he found Chisago Lake too crowded when several hundred settlers had come. It is not

definitely known what year he moved to Cambridge, but it must have been in the late 'fifties or early 'sixties. He spent his remaining days there and is buried in the cemetery of the Cambridge Lutheran Church. A suitable monument has been erected. Per Anderson's son, Daniel, became county auditor in Isanti county, and also served as representative in the legislature.

Anderson was not the very first Lutheran settler at Cambridge, however, for according to the history of the community written by Alfred Bergin that honor belongs to Isak Edblad. He came in 1858 or 1859, having lived in Wisconsin two years since his arrival from

Sweden. He was a minister's son. In his log cabin home, built shortly after he came to Cambridge, he gathered the settlers who wanted to come for a simple devotional service. In this informal and spontaneous laymen's activity the Cambridge Lutheran Church had its beginning.

Since many of the settlers came from Chisago Lake, the missionary minded pastor there, C. A. Hedengran, made occasional visits to the Cambridge community. No record is available as to when the first visit took place, but it may have been as early as 1860. He continued to visit the place occasionally, and other pastors came once in a while. Among these were Andrew Jackson, A. Lindholm, P. A. Cederstam, and L. O. Lindh.

The trend of settlement in Minnesota may be seen in the decision

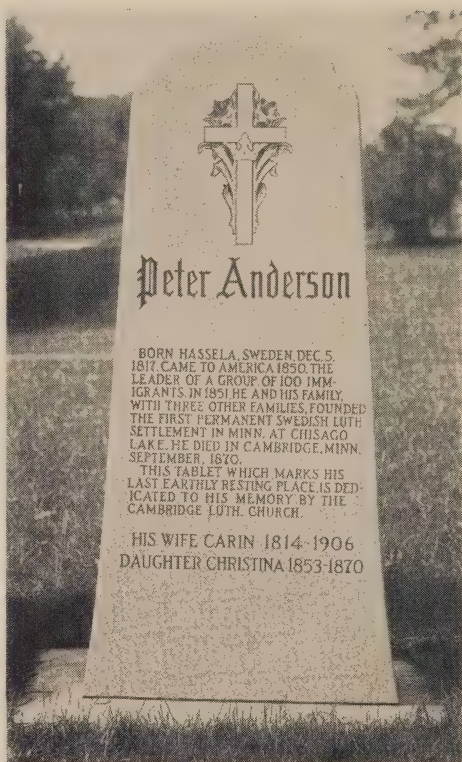


PHOTO COURTESY CAMBRIDGE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Peter Anderson monument at Cambridge

of the government to move the United States Land Office in 1858 from Stillwater to Cambridge. The Stillwater papers poked fun at this. In a great wave of derision they even wrote poetry about the non-existent town of Cambridge. They pretended to see no sense in establishing a land office in the wilderness "on Rummy's banks." But at that time the government land in Washington and Chisago counties was nearly all taken up, and therefore the transfer of the land office to Cambridge was a timely move. After the Civil War the settlers came in flocks.

The exact date of the organization of the Cambridge Lutheran Church is not known. No record of the first meeting is extant. There are evidences that the congregation was organized some time in 1864. Bergin, in a historical article on Cambridge published in *Prärieblomman* 1903 says it was organized some time in the month of November 1864 in the Edblad home. But in the booklet published by the Cambridge congregation in 1904, at its fortieth anniversary, Bergin says the organization meeting must have been some time earlier in the year. At the anniversary festivities Rev. Jonas Magny was one of the speakers. He had served in Cambridge in 1864 as parochial school teacher and preacher. (His name at that time was Magnuson, and the Conference Minutes corroborate the fact that he served in Cambridge in 1864.) He was a student at St. Ansgar's Academy, and Cambridge was his first field of missionary work. He stated in 1904 that he was brought to Cambridge by Pastor Hedengran, who stayed long enough to conduct a service and organize a congregation. Then he left Student Magnuson in full charge.

Since the school term at St. Ansgar's Academy closed in May, it must have been early summer when Hedengran accompanied Magny to Cambridge and there organized a congregation. Further evidence that the congregation was organized some time between June, 1864, and January, 1865, is found in references in the Conference minutes. In the minutes of the meeting held in June 1864 Cambridge and Fish Lake are referred to as "mission places" and in the minutes for January 1865 there is a reference to the "congregation in Cambridge."

There were only sixteen communicants and twelve children who became members of the church at the time of its organization. But Magny stated that attendance at services in the Edblad home that summer was generally good. As soon as the public school closed Magny began teaching Swedish parochial school. He found that the children were very good and eager to learn, and they had such respect for the



PHOTO COURTESY CAMBRIDGE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Mr. and Mrs. Isak Edblad, First Lutheran Settlers at Cambridge.

schoolmaster that he thought it best to make special efforts to be kind and gentle to them so they would lose their fear of him.

Rev. A. Lindholm of Marine (Scandia) came for a visit at Christmas time, 1864, and again in the spring of 1865. Isak Edblad continued to lead the services in the absence of a pastor. During the summer of 1866 a large group of immigrants arrived and in the fall many of them joined the congregation. One of these was Erik Norell. Soon after his arrival he was given a contract to build a church for \$800.00. Services were held there for the first time on October 6, 1867, when three pupils were confirmed. On that day the immigrants from Dalarne came joyfully to church in their Dalecarlian costumes. The congregation at this time numbered seventy-eight members.

A unique feature in the story of Cambridge is the way they brought their small children to church when the family had to walk. They made a sort of leather basket in which the little ones were carried. The mothers even carried their children in this way on their backs while working. When they arrived at church the cradles were hung in a near-by tree. This novel parking place remained as a landmark in Cambridge for many years, until comparatively recent times.

Hedengran and other pastors made occasional visits to Cambridge until 1870 when the first resident pastor was secured, Jonas Auslund. He served as pastor of the Cambridge church only a little over a year,

1870 to 1871, but in this short period of time much was accomplished for the establishing and strengthening of the work. By the time he left ninety-two families belonged to the congregation. Church records were systematized, and an orderly church activity was established. Auslund also served Fish Lake and the scattered settlements around Cambridge where as yet no congregations had been organized. Even after he moved to St. Paul in 1871 to serve as pastor of First Lutheran Church, he continued to make occasional visits to Cambridge until another pastor was secured in the fall of 1872. Auslund was married to a daughter of Jonas Norell, and during his pastorate in Cambridge he lived at the Norell home in Isanti and travelled to his churches on foot or on horseback.

From 1872 until 1885 the congregation was served by Pastor A. Engdahl. On account of the many home mission fields calling for attention and the scarcity of pastors in the Conference, Engdahl's parish became an extensive one. It was said that it reached "from Center City to Lake Park and from St. Paul to Duluth." We may take this to mean that he made occasional home mission journeys to places within the area mentioned, but other pastors also made similar visits in the same regions.

While Jonas Magny served in Cambridge in 1864 he walked to the near-by settlement of Fish Lake, some eight miles east, and conducted services. He was the first Lutheran missionary to visit the settlement.



PHOTO COURTESY CAMBRIDGE LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Replicas of original Cambridge Lutheran Church (left)
and Isak Edblad cabin (right)*

The housewife in the home where the service was conducted, was a sister of Eric Norelius. It is probable that some of the Fish Lake people originally belonged to the Cambridge congregation, but the road between those places was a mere trail, hardly passable for any sort of vehicle. Consequently the settlers decided to organize a congregation in their own community. The meeting for this purpose was held in a school house at the north end of Fish Lake, on February 19, 1867, with Pastor Hedengran as chairman. The first deacons were: Jonas Erikson, Lars Larson, and Carl Youngquist; trustees, Jonas Erikson, Nils Hokanson, and John Erikson.

Fish Lake had occasional visits by pastors on missionary journeys, until in 1870 when it united with Cambridge in calling Rev. Jonas Auslund. As we have seen, he stayed only a year. After this time Fish Lake called Rev. A. F. Tornell and he served there 1872-1874. Rev. N. J. Brink, who came in 1875, served until his death in 1887. The first church was built in 1874.



PHOTO COURTESY CAMBRIDGE LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Mrs. A. Engdahl,
A Pioneer Pastor's Wife.*

Augustana, Minneapolis

Father Louis Hennepin first cast his astonished eyes upon the Falls of St. Anthony in 1680 while traveling along the Mississippi as a captive of the Sioux. He named the falls in honor of the saint of Padua and soon thereafter, having been freed from captivity by the timely arrival of *Sieur Du Luth*, he proceeded to tell the world about his discovery. Later explorers tried to describe the beauty of this cataract. For almost 150 years after Hennepin beheld the falls the natural scenery remained undisturbed. There were those who foresaw the possibilities of development of the latent power, but it was left for a later generation to see the reality.

In 1819 Fort Snelling was established and a few years later the army built a small sawmill utilizing some of the water power of St. Anthony Falls. No civilian settlement was made at the place until the village of St. Anthony was begun on the east side of the river in 1840. It did not have a rapid growth in its early years. When Minnesota became a Territory in 1849 St. Anthony had only 200 inhabitants. During the territorial boom in the 'fifties the village grew faster, and in 1860 it had a population of 3,258.

The land west of the Mississippi was not ceded by the Indians until 1851 and was not officially opened for white settlement until 1854. The first claims were then established on the west bank of the river at St. Anthony Falls, and a mill was built by Franklin Steele. Minneapolis was soon a thriving little village. (Prior to this, in 1835, a white man's dwelling had been built on a spot now included in Minneapolis, by Samuel and Gideon Pond, who established an Indian mission on the shore of Lake Harriet.)

In 1860 Minneapolis had a population of 2,564, considerably less than its rival across the river. But by 1865 Minneapolis had increased to 4,607, while St. Anthony had only 3,499.

Though thousands of Lutheran immigrants were coming into Minnesota during the territorial boom, it seems that very few of them were attracted to Minneapolis or to St. Anthony. The pioneer pastors of the Minnesota Conference were constantly alert for every opportu-



PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Minneapolis in 1857. Washington and Second Avenue South,
looking toward the river.*

nity to gather their Swedish countrymen for divine worship. With this purpose in view Peter Carlson came to Minneapolis from Carver county the week before Christmas, 1857. He found only one Swedish family and they were freethinkers. No service was held at that time.

In January 1861 when Eric Norelius was serving as the Augustana Synod's missionary in Minnesota, he drove through Minneapolis but concerning this place he makes the remark "At that time there were no Swedes in Minneapolis, so there was no need to stop and preach there." Strange as that statement sounds to us now, it seemed perfectly logical and correct to the men who considered their mission field strictly limited by nationalistic lines.

In the latter part of 1862, probably about the middle of December, Peter Carlson again was in Minneapolis, driving up and down the unpaved streets of the young and sprawling village. He was looking for Swedes. At last he found a family on a farm a mile north of town. There it was agreed to hold services, and a message was sent to the Swedish people in the village. There were five who came, three young men and two young women. To this little group Rev. Carlson preached the Word of God. This was the beginning of the Augustana Synod's activity in the city which now is the "capital" of the Synod and of the

Minnesota Conference. In the city of Minneapolis there are now nineteen congregations belonging to this Conference, with a total membership of 23,234 baptized Christians.

During the years of the Civil War Peter Carlson, Andrew Jackson, and others of the Minnesota Conference pastors made occasional visits to Minneapolis but no congregation was organized until 1866. On the 16th of April that year a little group of Lutherans gathered in an Episcopal schoolhouse, which was their customary place of worship (in the vicinity of Fifth Street and Seventh Avenue South) and under the leadership of Pastor Carlson they voted to organize a congregation with the name: Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The names of the following charter members were recorded in the minutes of that meeting: Peter Jonson and family; Carl Gustaf Vanstrom and family; Johan Aug. Johnson and family; Ole Hanson and family; H. Lindberg, Nils Mauritz Vanstrom, S. Törnquist, and Peter Peterson. Three deacons were elected and a committee was chosen to gather funds for a church lot. Then adjournment was taken to May 29, at which time trustees were to be elected and a constitution adopted.

The May 29th meeting was held at the home of C. G. Vanstrom, on Third Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues South. No pastor is mentioned as being present at this session. Mr. Vanstrom was chairman, P. Serelius secretary. Trustees elected were Mr. Vanstrom for three years, Olof Hanson for two years, and Peter Peterson for one year. The constitution recommended by the Augustana Synod was then read and adopted, and the congregation voted to petition for admit-

Minneapolis in 1857, corner of Washington and Second Avenue South. Along these streets Rev. Peter Carlson drove in December 1857 hunting for Swedish Lutherans but found none.



PHOTO COURTESY
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

tance to the Synod. (On June 16 the Synod voted to receive the congregation.) The Conference, at its meeting in June, urged St. Paul and Minneapolis to unite in calling a pastor.

The following year, 1867, the congregation was ready to take definite steps toward securing a church property. On August 17 the trustees were authorized to purchase Lot 6, Block 110, on "Vashington Aveno" as the minutes of that meeting specifically declare. The trustees were told to buy "on the best possible terms," and to use the money in the treasury for a down payment. The amount on hand was \$184.87. The purchase price was \$450.00. The balance needed was secured by mortgaging the property.

At this meeting another important decision was made, when the deacons were asked to establish a Sunday school. J. A. Johnson was elected superintendent, and the church council was authorized to buy the necessary Bibles, Catechisms, and other books recommended by the Augustana Synod for the instruction of the children. Rev. Andrew Jackson, president of the Conference school at East Union, was chairman of this congregational meeting.

As yet the congregation had taken no definite action to secure a pastor, but the membership was slowly increasing and at a meeting on January 2, 1868 Alfred Johnson was elected to go to the Minnesota Conference convention and confer with the pastors about calling a pastor for St. Paul and Minneapolis, as a parish. Augustana voted to pay \$150.00 per year as their share of the pastor's salary. This money was to be raised by a church tax, \$5.00 per year for a man and \$3.00 per year for a woman member of the church. Half of the amount should be paid before June 1 and the other half before October 1 each year. This method of financing was in vogue in many congregations in the pioneer period.

The Conference was deeply concerned about Minneapolis and St. Paul, and now advised the two congregations to call student Ole Paulson, the young Norwegian man from East Union who had served as the first Conference treasurer and then had been led into the work of the church as lay preacher and was now about to be ordained.

At a meeting in Minneapolis on February 25 some men from the St. Paul congregation came over to discuss the situation. They reported that St. Paul had decided to call Rev. Peter Sjöblom of Porter, Indiana. This new development caused a variety of opinions among the Minneapolis Lutherans. They did not join with St. Paul in calling a pastor at

this time, but voted to engage the services of Mr. J. G. Sjöquist, a student attending St. Ansgar's Academy. The St. Paul people were too few to call a pastor alone, so they agreed to have Mr. Sjöquist serve on alternate Sundays.

Plans for erection of a church on their new lot were formulated at a meeting of the Augustana congregation on April 13, 1868. The church was to be sixty by thirty-eight feet and twenty feet high, with Gothic style windows. An appeal for funds was to be made, the goal to be \$500.00. One committee was elected to solicit from church members, another to solicit from "the Americans." The congregation also petitioned for the privilege of receiving offerings from all the churches of the Augustana Synod, and the Synod recommended this to the congregations.

The congregation at first consisted of Swedes and Norwegians. During the winter and spring of 1868 some agitation had been going on to get the Norwegians into an organization of their own. In May the Augustana Church in a brotherly and generous spirit voted to refund to the Norwegian Church the amount of money contributed by the Norwegian members who had withdrawn. Two Norwegian congregations were established in Minneapolis, and Ole Paulson became pastor of one of these after his ordination in June 1868. He also served a group in St. Paul which had separated from the First Lutheran Church. The congregation which he served in Minneapolis was affiliated with the Minnesota Conference until 1870.

Student Sjöquist began serving the Augustana Church and First Lutheran of St. Paul in the summer of 1868. In February 1869 the congregations renewed their call to him, but in October of the same year Augustana voted to call a pastor alone. Two candidates were voted on, Rev. Cederstam and Student Sjöquist. The latter was elected. This procedure was repeated the following April. But on September 23, 1870 the congregation resolved not to retain Sjöquist unless he would be ordained. He had applied to the Augustana Synod for ordination at its meeting in June 1870 but had been directed by the Synod to go to the seminary in Paxton, Illinois, to complete the prescribed course in theology. Sjöquist was one of four young men who received this advice at the time. He declined to give heed to this resolution of the Augustana Synod, and decided instead to go to the Synod of Northern Illinois for ordination. The Augustana Church expressed its satisfaction with this and even elected Mr. Vanstrom to accompany him as

*Old Augustana Church,
Minneapolis, at Washing-
ton and Thirteenth Ave-
nues South, Erected 1868
and Used Until 1883.*

PHOTO COURTESY
AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH,
MINNEAPOLIS



delegate. Following his ordination Sjöquist returned to Minneapolis to take full charge as pastor of the Augustana congregation.

The Augustana Synod, at its convention in 1871, was officially notified of the step taken by Sjöquist and his congregation. A committee of three pastors, Erland Carlsson, P. M. Sannquist, and J. G. Lagerstrom, was elected to go to Minneapolis to bring the wanderers back into the fold. At a meeting in the Augustana Church on June 18 a friendly, peaceful discussion took place, after which Mr. Vanstrom made the motion that the congregation remain in the Augustana Synod, confessing that they had erred in asking Sjöquist to be ordained in another Synod. Sjöquist was asked to seek a transfer to the Augustana Synod. The motion was adopted. It was not long, however, until these irenic resolutions were thrown overboard. On August 4 the congregation had another meeting, at which the previous meeting was declared to have been illegal and all the business null and void. The congregation voted to keep Sjöquist, in spite of the fact that he had refused to seek a transfer to the Augustana Synod. The congregation thereupon voted to withdraw from the Augustana Synod, and to remain without synodical affiliation until further decision would be made.

There seems to have been no serious antagonism against the Augustana Synod or the Minnesota Conference. As soon as the Augustana Church had voted to sever their affiliation, the Conference pastors began to take steps to have services in Minneapolis, and asked for permission to use the Augustana Church for this purpose. Rev. J. Auslund was at this time stationed as resident pastor in St. Paul, and he was granted permission in January 1872 to conduct services in the Augus-

tana Church when it did not interfere with their own services. The result was that Auslund soon won the confidence of the Augustana members, and in March 1872 he was called to take charge of the pastoral work after Sjöquist left, until the congregation could secure a pastor of their own. Sjöquist left shortly after this, and the congregation issued a call to student C. A. Evald on August 6, 1872, to become their pastor after his ordination. He accepted this call and came in the fall of 1872.

The congregation at this time consisted of ninety communicants. However popular Sjöquist may have been for a time, it is evident that no great progress was made under his leadership. A church had been built, it is to be noted, but the congregation was heavily in debt, and even owed Sjöquist \$300 on his salary when he was to leave. Special efforts were made to raise this amount, but the other indebtedness continued to increase for several years. The church dues were seldom paid on time, according to statements in the minutes of the congregation. Again and again committees were chosen to take up subscriptions to pay the church debt. Appeals were made both to members and non-members, and there is evidence that Governor Pillsbury once contributed \$5.00 to help Augustana pay its debt.

On September 10, 1872 the congregation voted to join the Augustana Synod again, since they had called a man who was to be ordained in this synod. This begins a new era in the history of Augustana Church. Rev. C. A. Evald was an energetic, zealous, and capable man who gave himself unstintingly to the work. Better order was instituted in all departments of the church's activity. Rules were adopted as to how the Sunday school should be conducted and it was stipulated that records should be carefully kept. A Sunday school library was established. The various little separate funds of the congregation were combined into one church treasury. A missionary society was organ



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. C. A. Evald



PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Return of exploring expedition to Minneapolis in 1869 after original survey for Northern Pacific railroad. Photo taken on Washington Avenue. Nicollet Hotel in the background.

ized in January 1873. Parochial school was established. A parsonage was built back of the church. The old Augustana Church was at the corner of Washington and Thirteenth Avenues South. The parsonage, facing Thirteenth Avenue, is still standing.

The troublesome debt still hung over them. Though every member was assessed his or her proportionate share, \$10.00 per man and \$5.00 per woman, the financial panic of 1873 made it practically impossible for the majority of members to pay. In September the congregation reluctantly voted to sell its property to pay the debts if no other solution could be found.

This drastic action did not become necessary. Beginning in 1874 the debt, which then amounted to \$2,514.00 was whittled down a little, and as the congregation increased in numbers and financial conditions returned to normal, the congregation not only managed to keep its property intact, but also began to show a genuine concern for the financial needs of others. The Synodical school in Paxton, Illinois was to receive twenty-five cents per member. A collection was to be given to the Conference school at East Union. The victims of the grasshopper invasion in Watonwan county were given aid. Destitute and ill members of the congregation received financial help. The missionary society was to

work for the support of home and foreign missions. Home mission offerings were received in the church at every communion service, which was once a month. The pastor's salary was increased to \$500 and two free will offerings.

Extension of the activities of the church is seen in a report included in the minutes of January 5, 1874. There it is mentioned that services were being held in north Minneapolis and in St. Anthony. The city was growing rapidly on both sides of the river, and in 1875 the population of the then unified city was 32,721. Gone were the days when the Conference pastors warned their people not to move to that wild and ungodly city. From this time and on the city of Minneapolis became more and more a Lutheran stronghold. The first daughter congregation was Bethlehem, organized 1874. Since then a new Augustana Synod congregation has been organized every fourth year, on the average, in Minneapolis.

C. A. Evald received a call to Immanuel Church, Chicago, in 1875 and resigned from Augustana. The people voted unanimously urging him to withdraw his resignation, but he moved to Chicago. Augustana had a difficult time agreeing on whom to call, and no pastor was secured until 1877, when Auslund of St. Paul decided to move to Minneapolis. The next year, however, his health failed and he died in 1878.

In August 1878 Rev. J. Ternstedt of Batavia, Illinois was called and came to Minneapolis. During his pastorate the present church building was erected, an outstanding accomplishment which meant a great deal for the stability and the furtherance of Lutheran church work in the city. Attendance had been increasing when Rev. Evald was pastor of the congregation, so that in 1875 they faced the problem of finding more room or turning people away from services. It was then decided to build a gallery. But as the city grew and the membership of the congregation increased, it became evident that the congregation needed a much larger church. The new church at Seventh Street and Eleventh Avenue South was completed in 1883 at a cost of \$23,219.74.

The growth of the congregation to a membership of almost 1,400 communicants, and the establishment of a unique colony of mercy, including home for the aged, home for children, and home for young women, belong to a later period. It was in the thirty-eight year pastorate of Dr. C. J. Petri—1888 to 1926—that the Augustana Church had its great development from a pioneer immigrant Swedish group to a strongly unified congregation making a real contribution to the moral, social, and spiritual welfare of a large American city.

New Sweden

(*Bernadotte*)

Before the Minnesota Conference was organized two congregations had been established in Nicollet county, one in St. Peter and one eleven miles northwest of there, at a place first called Torkel's Lake and later Scandian Grove. As more settlers were coming and they saw that the land was good they moved on farther to the north and west. An old trail long used by Indians and fur traders, led from Traverse des Sioux up through the country. Among the new settlers arriving in 1858 were Carl Nelson and family, Per Carlson, John Paulson, and Erick Johnson. Leaving the Scandian Grove settlement behind they ventured farther on into the unsettled areas. Erick Johnson had horses, the others had oxen. He tried to hurry a little faster, since the oxen moved very slowly, but he became mired down in a slough and had to wait for his comrades with their oxen to help him out.

Seven or eight miles from Scandian Grove two of them settled. The others went farther. The succeeding years saw a continual influx of new settlers going west and north. Even the Sioux outbreak in 1862 caused only a temporary halt. Among those who came in 1859 were Sven Bengtson, P. M. Fritiof, and John Johnson. Then followed Erik Olson, Anders Wilson, and Johannes Beck. The first settlers in the present Town of Bernadotte, in the north central part of Nicollet county, were the four Swedish immigrant families, Johannes Fredrickson's, John Smedberg's, Anders Gustafson's, and Jonas Olson's. These came in 1864, and others followed soon after.

As early as in February, 1859 the Conference took note of the new settlement, though its location was not very well known at that time. Among the new home mission fields to be investigated we find "Swan Lake and the region west of there." (The new settlement was north of Swan Lake.) Cederstam was assigned to visit them some time during the winter. He was pastor at Scandian Grove, and some of the new settlers joined his church. But it is probable that he himself did not yet know exactly the location of some of these new settlements in the county.

In the spring of 1861 Norelius, serving as travelling missionary, re

ported to the Conference that he had visited Swan Lake, a settlement which he described as ten miles west of Scandian Grove, consisting of five or six Swedish families and some Norwegians. He said "Some of the Swedish families were Campbellites, a sort of Baptists, and the Norwegians had been much influenced by Methodism. I preached there once, and some of them were present; I do not think any of our pastors had been there before."

Nothing further is definitely known as to the progress of the Lutheran church in that settlement for several years. In 1862 Cederstam left Scandian Grove and did not return. It is likely that many of the New Sweden settlers fled from their homes when the Indians went on the warpath, but in 1864 settlement of the area began in earnest.

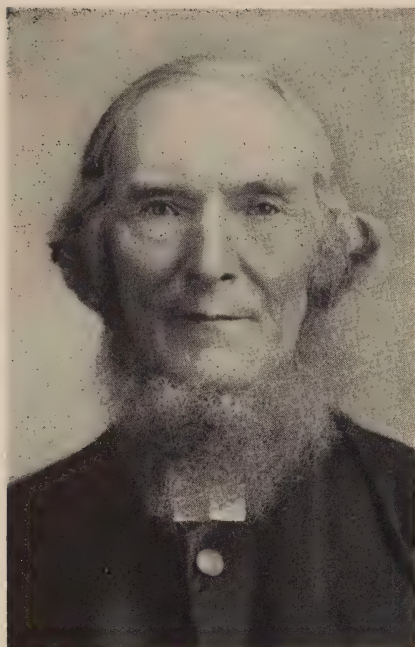
Rev. John Pehrson had become Cederstam's successor as pastor in St. Peter and Scandian Grove. He came out to the New Sweden settlement as often as weather, roads, and other circumstances would permit. The meetings were usually held at the home of John Magnus Peterson. Mr. Peterson himself usually led the services on Sunday when the pastor was unable to come. Sometimes this responsibility rested on Carl Nelson. Later, when a school house was built in the community, services were held there.

On May 4, 1866 the congregation was organized under the leadership of Rev. Pehrson. The meeting was held in the J. M. Peterson home. Thirty-eight persons signed their names to the following decla-



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Historical marker at Bernadotte commemorating the early settlers.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. C. M. Ryden

ration: "We, the undersigned, Swedish countrymen in New Sweden of Nicollet and Sibley counties, Minnesota, having been reared within the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in order that we may also here enjoy the blessing of the preaching of God's Word and the Holy Sacraments in accordance with the confession and doctrine of our church, do hereby agree to organize ourselves into a Swedish Evangelical Congregation; and as a Congregation we adopt the constitution which is adopted by the congregations of the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod."

John Peterson served as secretary of the meeting. The following were elected as

church officers: Deacons, Carl Bonderson, John Peterson, Anders P. Swenson, and John Hed; trustees, Anders Anderson, Anders Gustafson, and S. P. Eld.

Isak Johnson had promised to donate five acres of land to be used as a building site and as a cemetery. The offer was accepted, but no building operations were started the first few years. In the meantime the school house had been built. At a special meeting of the congregation on March 11, 1871 it was decided, with the consent of the school trustees, to build an addition to the school building to accommodate the growing congregation.

About this time the ministry of Rev. Pehrson in the congregation was closed. It had been a period of pioneer struggles and hardships. He had also had the sad experience of trying to cope with dissension in the little congregation. A defrocked minister from Sweden, Fogelblad by name, had come to the New Sweden settlement and tried to work his

way in as pastor and leader among them. About half the congregation followed him for a time, and they would not listen to the pleas of Rev. Pehrson, until at Christmas time, 1869 they learned to know the truth about the new preacher. One day Pehrson found Fogelblad in St. Peter in a drunken condition, and hauled him home to his friends so they could see for themselves.

At the annual meeting of the congregation in June, 1871 student C. M. Ryden was called to become their pastor after his ordination. He became the first resident pastor, serving for fourteen years.

Immediately after Ryden's coming plans were begun for the erection of a church. The land accepted in 1866 for the purpose was found to be unsatisfactory to some, on account of its location, and an offer by John Hed to donate ten acres of land was now accepted. It is the site where the present church is located. The congregation bought forty acres of land adjoining it. A committee was elected to secure subscriptions for church and parsonage. The appeal was highly successful. Although most of the settlers had been only a few years on their homesteads, they now gave a total of \$1,667.00. The congregation at this time numbered only 111 communicants, yet there were 104 persons who pledged money for the building project. Six men gave \$40.00 each. The parsonage was built the same year, a four room house costing \$125.00 in cash. The church was built in 1872 and the interior completed in 1873. The total cost of the church in cash was \$1607.

The congregation increased in membership from 111 communicants in 1871 to 329 in 1872, and continued to grow in the following years until it soon approached the 500 mark. A new church was built in 1896. The name was changed from New Sweden to Bernadotte in 1890.

The names of the charter member and all others who had settled in the community prior to 1870 have been inscribed on a bronze tablet placed in front of the present church. This project was financed by the Brotherhood.

Mooers Prairie

Large areas of Minnesota were covered with forests when the white people came, but the name "Big Woods" was given to the belt of hardwood timber west of the pine forests, running in a roughly diagonal line from northwest to southeast. West of Minneapolis it was about sixty or seventy miles wide. In places the forest grew so thick as to be impenetrable before roads were built.

To clear this land and open it for cultivation was no small task. But when the land was cleared and plowed the soil was found to be rich and productive. And the early settlers in these regions had abundant timber for houses and wood for fuel.

Wright county lay wholly within the Big Woods area. Prior to 1857 there were very few white people who settled here, and even in the Civil War period the population was small. The first settlers, in the spring of 1856, were some Americans. Two years later a few more arrived. Most of these found it too difficult to clear the land and moved to other places. Josiah P. Mooers and his two sons settled south of the present village of Cokato, on a piece of land which was not all forested. This little prairie was a singular feature of the landscape in the Big Woods, wherefore the township was named "Mooers Prairie." (Some years later this township was divided into Stockholm and Cokato townships, and the name "Mooers Prairie" disappeared from the map).

Although Lutherans were not the earliest settlers in the Mooers Prairie region, this area became one of the most thoroughly Lutheran communities in the state. In and around Cokato the Minnesota Conference has a number of congregations today. The oldest one of them is Salem, Stockholm, which originally was known as the Mooers Prairie congregation.

The first Swedish Lutheran settlers were three families, John Brown's, Swan Swanson's, and Andrew Johnson's, all of whom came in 1862. In the following years others came, some directly from Sweden, some from older settlements in this country. By the end of the Civil War a fairly large Lutheran colony had come into existence.

No definite records are available as to when the first Lutheran serv-



PHOTO COURTESY SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, STOCKHOLM, COKATO

How they went to Church at Mooers Prairie.

ices were held at Mooers Prairie. Eric Norelius stayed there overnight in 1861 but there were no Lutherans at that time. It is quite likely that Peter Carlson or Andrew Jackson may have been there some time in the early 'sixties, and when no pastor was there the people gathered for devotional meetings under the leadership of one of the settlers, Pehr Modig.

The time came when they felt the need of an organized congregation, and they sought the help of the nearest Lutheran pastor, John S. Nilson in Watertown. On July 18, 1866, he met with them to lead them in organizing a congregation. Peter Carlson was present also. Sixty-three adults and sixty-two children were enrolled as charter members. A constitution was adopted and the following deacons were elected: N. J. Mattson, Johannes Syverson Rustad, Anders Peterson, Hans Erickson, Anders Swanberg, and Anders Peter Johnson. As new settlers came the congregation grew to a membership of nearly 200 in less than three years.

Rev. Nilson was called to serve them and he promised to visit them once a month. This was no easy matter for him to take care of. The distance was about twenty-five miles and roads were practically nonexistent. In spite of difficulties he came regularly for two or three years and laid the groundwork for the future development of the congregation. Services were held in a schoolhouse until October 1868 when the congregation met for the first time in a building erected as a temporary church.

Desiring a pastor of their own they called student J. G. Lagerstrom who was to be ordained in June, 1869. He came shortly after his ordination, and served until 1874. At the first congregational meeting attended by Lagerstrom, on July 17, 1869, it was thought necessary, for some reason to reorganize the congregation. It was also incorporated shortly after this. The rough exterior of a log cabin meeting house had been erected before Lagerstrom came. The house was originally intended for a parsonage but was never used for that purpose. In 1870 a parsonage was built.

Rev. Lagerstrom served not only Mooers Prairie, but also North Crow River, Cokato, Dassel, Beckville, and Litchfield. When he left the parish in 1874 P. A. Cederstam was called and served as pastor at Mooers Prairie until 1882. During this time a new church was built, sixty by thirty-six feet in size. The old meeting house was sold to the

school district for \$200 on condition that the congregation might use it for services for a period of two years.

Rev. Lagerstrom had a large and widely scattered parish, and by his zealous efforts as a home missionary new congregations were organized. Assistance came from one of the men in the Mooers Prairie congregation, P. J. Eckman. As a lay leader, he began to take active part in the work of his own church, and soon he was being asked to go and speak at devotional services in neighboring congregations. From 1870 to 1880 he served as a lay preacher in the service of the Minnesota Conference. He was ordained in 1880 and was pastor in East and West Sveadahl for a number of years. Two of his sons became pastors.

Aside from the question of where to build the church, and whether to consolidate with the Cokato congregation when that was organized in 1870, the history of the Mooers Prairie congregation indicates that it was singularly free from the dissensions that affected most of the pioneer churches. There are evidences in the records of the congregation that a rather strict and stern discipline was maintained. Some of the rules adopted seem a bit strange and harsh to our generation, and some reflect the primitive conditions of pioneer times. We quote some of the resolutions found in the minutes:

"Owners of dogs and other animals running loose shall be *strictly*



PHOTO COURTESY SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, STOCKHOLM, COKATO

Pioneer Farm Home in the Mooers Prairie Community, Wright County.

admonished to keep them away from the church while services are being held."

"Parents and guardians are admonished to look after their children, especially boys, when they are in church."

"The sexton shall keep the doors closed during the altar service, and after singing of the last hymn until the church notices have been given."

"No so-called political papers shall be distributed in the church."

"Persons not belonging to the congregation who desire to have their children baptized, shall give a written promise that their children shall be instructed by the congregation in true Christianity and in the spirit of Lutheranism and they shall contribute according to ability to the Christian training of their children."

"That the congregation does not permit the pastor to officiate at funerals of persons who for one reason or another have been dropped or excommunicated."

The records also show that the congregation in its early history carried on an aggressive warfare against drunkenness and similar evils.

As Lutheran settlers continued to pour into the region other congregations came into existence. Carlslund, Buffalo was organized in 1866; North Crow River and Cokato 1870; Swedesburg, Waverly, 1873; Gethsemane and Swan Lake, Dassel, 1873.

The Carlslund settlement dates back to 1857 when Christian Ilstrup, Abraham Ilstrup, and Simon Ilstrup came from Sweden and took homesteads two miles south of where Buffalo is situated. The first native white person in the Buffalo community was C. M. Ilstrup born December 3, 1857. Three years later a large colony of people came from Sweden and settled near-by. Among these settlers were some who had a desire to see a church organized in their community. Two women, Maria Moody and Helga Jonsdotter went on foot through the Big



Rev. J. G. Lagerstrom

Woods to the parsonage at Watertown and requested Rev. John S. Nilson to come and conduct divine services. He heeded this plea and came.

These services by Rev. Nilson resulted in the organization of Carlslund Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wright county on November 7, 1866, in the home of Swen Erickson. He was the only settler who had a house. The other homes were mere shacks.

The congregation began with twenty-seven communicants and thirty-one children. Charter members of the congregation were: Erick Moody, John Johnson, Swen Erickson, Nils Anderson, Cornelius Arneson, Anders Johnson, Bengt Peterson, John Carlson, Nils Bengtson, John E. Erickson, Jens Stromberg, Nels Pierson, Per Swenson, together with their families. Records of the organization meeting have been preserved.

Rev. Nilson was asked to add this congregation to his already extensive parish, and he continued to serve Carlslund until 1881. The question of erecting a church building was discussed frequently. Christian Ilstrup offered, without remuneration, one-fourth acre of land. This offer was accepted at a meeting on February 11, 1870, and a log church was built. The next year one-half acre of land was obtained from Abraham Ilstrup for a cemetery. For this each family agreed to give a day's work to Abraham Ilstrup. The cemetery was dedicated on February 11, 1874.

In 1887 the second church was built. It was used nearly forty years and then it was sold and razed. The church lot was added to the cemetery.

The congregations organized in this region in the early 'seventies will be mentioned in a later chapter (Chapter 35).

Grove City

A letter dated March 2, 1859, at Marine Lund, Acton Township (Meeker county) Minnesota, written by Ola Monson to Eric Norelius gives us our first glimpse of the settlement now known as Grove City. The letter, written in Swedish, reads as follows in translation (translated by Rev. B. G. Holmes):

“My Dear Pastor Norelius—

“In accordance with prevalent desires to learn about the spiritual and temporal conditions of our fellow countrymen here and there I wish to inform you of our circumstances here. We are at present ten families, together with several single persons, every one of us having taken homestead claims. There are Swedish people all around us here for a distance of thirty miles east and west, making several settlements. Our settlement has not been given any definite name as yet, although it is called Marine Lund. But there is one settlement called Eagle Lake, and another is called Kandiyohi. Twelve miles beyond Eagle Lake I am told there is unsettled land, but as to its nature I am unable to say. Here are plenty of fields, and all are of the very best soil. Both southwest and northwest from here there is a great deal of timberland.

“As to our spiritual conditions here I am sorry to say that we have neither church nor leader. We have indeed gathered on Sundays to meditate on the Word of God, but since there are a few who differ from us in doctrine the harmony is far from what it ought to be. I wish to state that the majority of us are still faithful to the Lutheran Church. A Baptist minister, Nilson from Clear Water Lake, has been here on one visit, and made an attempt towards church work. He distributed a few copies of Wiberg’s book on Baptism.

“We have five unbaptized children here now, and some of these are a year and a half of age. No Lutheran pastor has yet visited us.

“I shall now add a few words regarding our temporal conditions. If I should mention something about myself I would say that I left Sweden in 1857, and settled down here, fifteen miles west of Forest City. My means and earning conditions are meager, but there are several who are in quite good circumstances. In time—by the grace of God

—it will undoubtedly be a great deal better; the beginning and the end are, as a rule quite unlike. The land here is of the best quality, and the timber is so plentiful that one can well afford to sell any amount of it.

“After I had finished writing, some of my friends came here and asked me to make a plea with you to send us someone to preach the Gospel. We are in a real wilderness, like unto straying sheep that have no shepherd, and some of us have not had the privilege of taking the Lord’s Supper for two years. But He who has called us will surely by His own good and gracious will send us someone in due season. Without question we are both too few and too poor to be able to keep a pastor here, but, of course, we hope for the coming of others that will increase the congregation.

OLA MONSON,

NELS WAYLANDER, P. J. LUND.”

Even before this letter was written the Minnesota Conference had taken action to send a home missionary to the settlements west of Forest City. In chapter 15 reference has been made to the decision of the Conference in February 1859, to send Peter Carlson to that area. At the June meeting Carlson reported that he had set out on a journey to the settlement during the last days of May but after driving forty miles he was forced to leave his horse and wagon and return home on foot. The Conference met again August 26 and 27 and then Carlson reported that he had visited the region around Forest City and had found seventy Swedish families south and west of that place. Two congregations were organized in Meeker county, one at Marine Lund consisting of twelve or fourteen families, and another one which was named Scandinavian, with about the same number of families. Carlson stated that the settlers were very attentive to the preaching of the Word and many were longing for spiritual help. However the Conference adopted a resolution stating that since none of the pastors was able to visit the people at Forest City they were urged to meet together for meditation and prayer and thus edify one another, and the Conference expressed the wish that someone of the pastors pay them a visit now and then as circumstances would permit.

The Marine Lund congregation was two or three miles west of the present village of Grove City. The village did not exist at that time. The “Scandinavian” congregation seems to have been somewhere west of Litchfield.

In February, 1860, the Conference asked Ola Paulson to visit Forest



COURTESY FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, GROVE CITY

Peter J. Lund, One of the Earliest of the Lutheran Pioneers in Meeker County. The Peter Lund chair, made in 1859, escaped the flames when Indians burned the Lund home in 1862.

City, and Peter Carlson promised to go there for a visit later in the spring. In June, 1860, Carlson and Cederstam were urged to visit the settlements west of Forest City as soon as possible.

In chapter 18 we have quoted Norelius' account of his home mission journey to Meeker and other counties in the winter of 1861. At the February meeting of the Conference that year he reported that Marine Lund had fifteen or twenty families, but these were divided religiously. He had conducted four services there and the people were attentive to the preaching. He said there were prospects for a fairly large congregation, and the people were eager to get a pastor and to proceed with the erection of a church.

But alas for pious wishes and optimistic plans! On an August day in 1862 the great Sioux outbreak had its bloody beginning in Acton township, only a few miles from the Marine Lund settlement. Peter Lund, J. Winquist, and Nels Waylander encountered the Indians the same day when they had perpetrated the massacre at Acton but they told the three settlers that they were bound for the woods to hunt deer. The men soon learned of the crime, and fled with their families to Forest City. When they returned some time later their homes had been

burned by the Indians. The home of Peter Lund, where Peter Carlson preached the Word in 1859, was among those destroyed by the Indians. The only article that had escaped the flames was a home made chair, made by Lund the same year that he settled on the homestead. Since planks and boxes were most frequently used for seating in those days, this chair was undoubtedly one of the most elegant pieces of furniture in the Peter Lund home. And we may assume that the first preacher—Peter Carlson—who preached the first sermon and baptized Peter Lund's child, had the honor of occupying this chair. This old relic—without question the oldest piece of furniture in Grove City—is still found at the Silseth home. A picture of its appears on page 216.

None of the settlers at Marine Lund was killed by the Indians, but the community was depopulated for a time as the Indians had destroyed homes and property and the settlers fled to Forest City and points farther east. Some of them returned a year or two later, and soon after the Civil War many new settlers arrived and the land was taken up.

The original Marine Lund congregation never applied for admit-



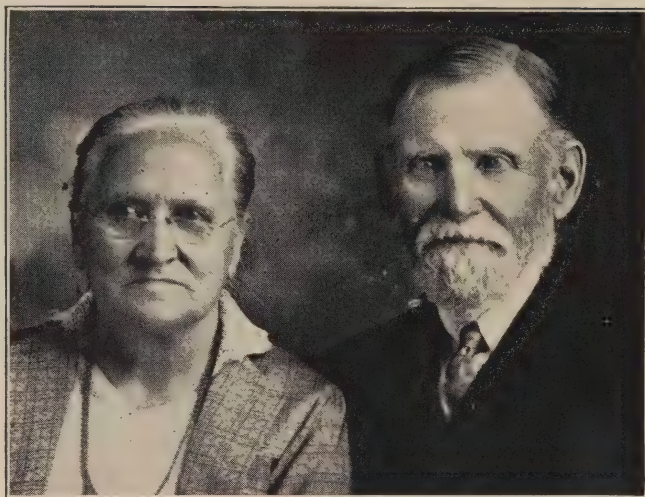
Lutherans Are Tardy

"The route Lutheran preachers now take is as follows: Lake Harold, Swede Grove, Rush Lake, Alexandria, and back. In this way they miss us. I suggest that on one trip, either going or coming, they go from Lake Harold to the Swedish settlement Tripolis in Kandiyohi County, thence to Eagle Lake and Rush Lake. The next tour would include Swede Grove.

In view of the fact that I have many times asked certain Lutheran preachers to visit us and have heard nothing from them, it would seem that they are rather tardy, inasmuch as we are well supplied with Methodist and Baptist preachers. Since the great majority here are Lutherans, it is no more than right that some of our preachers visit us as well as those of the sects we have named.

If Lutheran preachers contemplate coming to the Swedish settlement at Tripolis, they are heartily welcome to the home of J. H. Anderson."

Letter written from Tripolis, Minnesota, by J. H. Anderson on July 14, 1867, published in *Hemlandet* August 6, 1867, reprinted with translation in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society* 1922-1923, P. 138.



COURTESY FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, GROVE CITY

Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Nelson. Mrs. Nelson, a daughter of Peter J. Lund and wife, was the first child baptized at Grove City, in July, 1859.

tance to the Conference and Synod and was never listed in the statistical reports. When the community was resettled after the Indian outbreak, the name given to it was not Marine Lund but Swede Grove. On October 29, 1868, the Swedish Lutheran Swede Grove congregation was organized. It is not certain where the meeting was held, but was probably at the Lund home or the Winquist home. Chairman of the meeting was G. Larson and secretary C. A. Carlson. Officers were elected and a constitution was adopted. (See Chapter 27.) (There is a discrepancy in the date of organization. One source gives October 2, another October 29.)

No pastor was secured until the next year, when Rev. Peter Beckman met with the congregation on August 28 and the congregation called him to serve them once a month at a salary of \$125.00 per year. Rev. Beckman, one of the organizers of the Conference, had moved from Goodhue county in the spring of 1869 to Tripolis, a newly organized congregation near the village of Kandiyohi in the county of the same name. He bought land near Tripolis and settled down to a period of intensive and extensive home mission work in that region. In the

course of seven years he organized nine of the congregations included in the present Willmar district.

Beckman served the Swede Grove congregation from 1869 to 1873. In 1869 the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad was completed through Meeker county, and a station was established near Swede Grove. It was named Grove City. In 1871 the congregation bought three acres of land from the railroad company for fifty dollars and a church was built in 1873. The following year Norelius described it thus in an article published in *Augustana*: "The next station towards the east is Swede Grove, which has a congregation and a church. The church is situated in a grove, facing the railroad, is painted white and has a good appearance. These congregations (Atwater and Swede Grove) are being served by Pastor Dillner and seem to be progressing nicely."

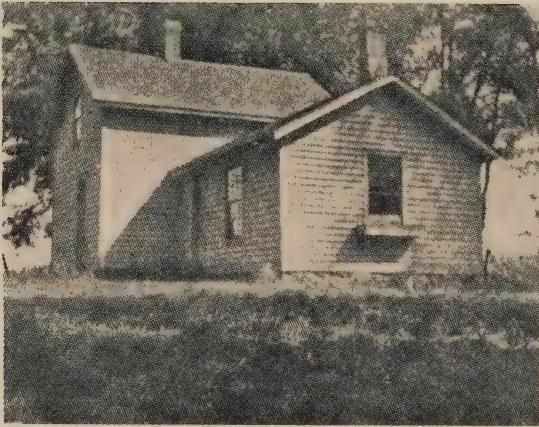
Pastor Peter Dillner had arrived there following his ordination in June 1874. For a time he served Swede Grove, Atwater, Litchfield, and Beckville. In 1878 the parish was divided and he had only the two first mentioned. He served these until 1883. He died the following year.

Beckville

In the story of Norelius' home missionary journey in the winter of 1861 (Chapter 18) we have read of his narrow escape in a severe blizzard and how he at last found his way to the home of the John Peterson family. In their little dugout he stayed a week while the storm raged. When it abated the settlers met in the Henry Thorn home for services. This was not the first time these settlers had been visited by a Lutheran pastor. Peter Carlson had been there in 1859 and it is possible that Andrew Jackson may have been there in 1860.

The Beckville community, seven miles southwest of Litchfield, was first settled in 1857 when two brothers, Henry and Charles Johnson came from Jamestown, New York where they had lived for five years. John Nelson also came in 1857. John Peterson and S. G. Kjellberg arrived in 1858 and John M. Sampson and Charles Allen in 1859. Others came in the following years. These settlers shared the usual pioneer hardships, poverty, and dangers. Worst of all was the Sioux outbreak which had its beginning at Acton, a few miles west of the Beckville colony. The settlers fled to safety but were forced to leave their homes and their property to the ravages of the Indians. Not until 1865 did the settlers return to their land to resume the task of building homes for themselves and their families. No definite steps towards organization of a congregation were taken for several years. Rev. T. H. Dahl, pastor at Nest Lake (New London) visited Beckville a few times in 1867 and 1868. He was the only Lutheran pastor in the entire region at that time.

In the spring of 1869 Peter Beckman came to Tripolis, and from that time the church activity takes more definite form. After a few visits in Beckville community Beckman found that there were those who desired to have an organized congregation, and a meeting for this purpose was held on November 15, 1869, in the John M. Sampson home. Charter members of the congregation were: Mr. and Mrs. John M. Sampson, daughter Louise and son John A.; Mr. and Mrs. John Nilson and three children; Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Johnson; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Allen and three children; Mr. and Mrs. L. M. Johnson and one child; Mr. and Mrs. Jonas Peterson and two chil-



John Sampson Home, Built 1859, First House in Beckville Community. The Congregation was Organized in this House, November 15, 1869.

PHOTO COURTESY
BECKVILLE LUTHERAN
CHURCH

dren; Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Johnson; C. L. Johnson; A. G. Larson; Mr. and Mrs. John P. Nygren and four children; Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Johnson and four children; Mr. and Mrs. John Paulson; Mr. and Mrs. Ola Johnson and six children; and Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Lindquist; a total of thirty communicants and twenty-one children. Rev. Beckman was called to conduct services one Sunday a month at a salary of \$125.00 per year. The gatherings were held in the homes for several years.

The St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Company donated five acres of land in 1871 for church and cemetery. The land was cultivated and the income designated for a building fund until 1873, when a small frame

Old Beckville Church, Built 1873.

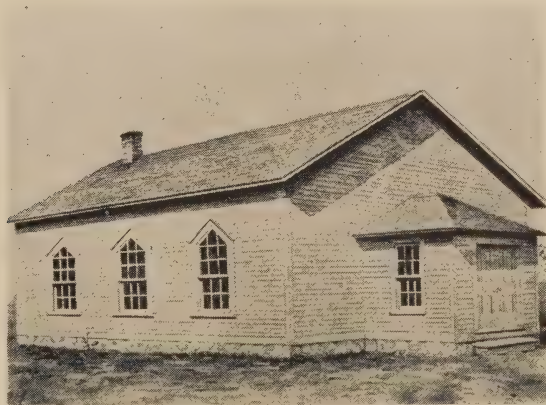


PHOTO COURTESY
BECKVILLE LUTHERAN
CHURCH

building was erected. Though not completed and furnished for several years it served its purpose as a church. In addition to the service given by Beckman the congregation also had occasional visits by other pastors including J. G. Lagerstrom, Peter Carlson, Andrew Jackson and others.

Pastor Peter Dillner was called and came after ordination in 1874. He was installed by Eric Norelius in October of that year, and following this visit Norelius gave the following account of the congregation: "Beckville is not a large congregation; it has only about seventy communicants. But it is, comparatively, a good congregation, consisting mostly of steady and faithful members. A serious Christian spirit is evident. The congregation is in a lovely and productive region and the

members are generally prosperous farmers. Last year a little frame church was built in a style that is very plain. It is not yet painted, either outside or inside. The one thing that was most noticeable to the visitor was that the church was kept very clean, and this circumstance is not a small matter. The condition of the church is often a reflection of the Christian attitude in the congregation. If there is a living and serious Christianity, it usually shows itself also in that the church is kept in good order, no matter how unpretentious it may be otherwise."

Rev. Dillner served the Beckville congregation 1874 to 1878, together with three other congregations. During the first part of the time he lived with the Sampson family. When Litchfield and Beckville formed a separate parish in 1878, Dillner moved to Swede Grove and continued as pastor there and in Atwater. The Beckville-Litchfield parish remained vacant for several years, until J. S. Ryding came in 1881.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. Peter Dillner

The Kandiyohi Region

When Minnesota became a state the Federal government offered to give ten sections of land free for the state capitol. A committee appointed by the governor in 1858 chose the land in Kandiyohi county, about five or six miles southeast of the present site of Willmar. This choice was rejected, and another committee chose ten sections a few miles farther south and east in the same county. This choice was approved by the U. S. Government in 1860. The state legislature passed a bill to locate the capitol there, but Governor Marshall vetoed it. All later efforts to move the capitol from St. Paul to Kandiyohi county failed, and after more than forty years the lands were sold.

It is easy to see that the proposal to locate the capitol there in 1858 and 1860 caused promoters to establish town sites and to induce settlers to move to that region. The difficulty of getting there was, however, a serious handicap before the railroads were built. The panic of 1857 checked immigration and most of the early townsites never materialized. Before the Sioux outbreak in 1862 some two hundred families had settled in Kandiyohi county. Among these were many Scandinavians and we have told in Chapters 17 and 19 something of the story of the beginnings of Lutheran home mission work there and how it was suddenly disrupted by the Sioux massacre.

When the Civil War had ended and the Sioux had been removed from the state, settlement of Kandiyohi county proceeded rapidly. In 1870 the population of Kandiyohi county (as at present constituted) was 4,805, of which 2,432 were immigrants from the Scandinavian countries. This therefore constituted an important field for the Minnesota Conference. The old New Sweden church, organized in 1859, was reorganized in 1866 under the name Nest Lake, and later became Lebanon Lutheran Church, New London. In March 1868 the pastor of this congregation, Rev. Theodore Dahl, who was the missionary for the entire county, met with the settlers at Tripolis and organized a congregation. The meeting was held at the home of John Anderson. In 1869 Rev. Peter Beckman came from Goodhue county and became pastor of the Tripolis congregation, where he served until 1876. During



PHOTO COURTESY WILLMAR TRIBUNE

Tripolis Church, Showing the original Log Church at Rear.

these years he made many missionary journeys and organized nine of the congregations now in the Willmar district.

Although the congregation had its beginning in 1868 the first legal organization was on May 29, 1869 when the following trustees were elected: John Anderson, Peter Green, and H. P. Olson. The first deacons were Louis Johnson, Andrew Johnson, and James Anderson. Louis Johnson was a lay preacher. He often assisted the pastor, both in his home congregation and in the outlying mission fields. In 1872 he was granted a license by the Augustana Synod to serve as lay preacher. He devoted much time to the missions in Douglas and Otter-tail counties, and in 1879 was ordained to the ministry.

Meetings of the Tripolis congregation were usually held in the homes of settlers, until 1871 when a log church was built. The work was under the direction of James Anderson, and the building was often referred to as the "James Church."

The congregation at Atwater had its beginning in 1868, and counts its origin from the same source as the Swede Grove Lutheran congregation, which at first consisted of people in both Meeker and Kandiyohi counties. The first recorded meeting took place on October 2, 1868. (See Chapter 25.) G. A. Larson served as chairman and C. A.

Carlson as secretary. At a meeting held May 3, 1869, it was proposed to join Nest Lake congregation in calling a pastor, but the motion was tabled for the time being, "because it had been reported that Rev. Beckman has come to Kandiyohi county and we may get assistance from him." On August 28 of that year Rev. Beckman was engaged to preach once a month, at a salary of \$125 per year.

At a joint meeting of the Swede Grove and Elizabeth congregations on February 14, 1870, it was resolved to abandon both organizations and form a new one under the name of "The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Gennesee, County of Kandiyohi, State of Minnesota." It was decided to purchase lots in Atwater and build a church there. The church was built the same year, and the congregation was received into the Synod that year. Rev. Beckman continued to serve

1 1 1

Reclaiming the Claims

"It may interest the readers of this paper to hear something about those parts where I formerly had my congregations; and since I have just returned from a missionary journey to them, will give a brief account of it. Already during the course of last year a number of Norwegians who formerly lived in those parts returned to their former homes. The greater number had land along the Crow river and spent last winter there. The Swedes, on the other hand, did not begin to return until this summer, the few who returned during the winter worked in a saw mill. This mill is now in operation, so that those who move in can obtain lumber at a convenient distance. There is talk of a flour mill near the saw mill. Most of the recent comers have settled near the saw mill. They are about twenty families. Some of them formerly belonged to a congregation called Wilson Prairie, but since this congregation cannot be revived because the Americans have come in ahead of the Swedes and taken up every piece of land in that community, nothing remains for them but to affiliate with the Nest Lake congregation, which was reorganized during my visit and has a membership of about forty communicants. Everybody appeared to be pleased and contented and had no fear of the Indians, the feeling of security coming naturally from an army post at Norway Lake nearby."

Letter written by Andrew Jackson, published in *Hemlandet* August 30, 1865, reprinted in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America* 1922-1923, P. 124-125.

until 1874 when Rev. Peter Dillner accepted a call to serve Atwater, Grove City, and Beckville, and served until his death in 1882. (Soon after the dissolution of the original Swede Grove church another one was organized with the same name and later became Grove City.)

On the western edge of Kandiyohi county is the township of Mamre. The first settlers in that region, most of them Swedish, arrived in 1867, '68, and '69. The first Lutheran preacher to visit the community was student J. G. Sjoquist. On September 13, 1869, Rev. J. P. Lundblad, then pastor at Nest Lake, came to conduct services and to organize a congregation. J. P. Rodman was secretary, and he is credited with having suggested the name "Mamrelund" for the congregation, "Mamre" being the name of the community and "lund" the first part of Rev. Lundblad's name. The first church board members were: Deacons, John Rodman, John Gillberg, J. H. Erickson, Per Lofgren, Hemming Hokanson, and Olof Nygren; trustees, Olof Bergstrom, Johan Ersson, and Anders Anderson. In 1870 a church was built but before it was finished it was destroyed by a windstorm. A new one was built in 1872.

Beckman and Louis Johnson served the congregation for a time in 1873 and 1874. Then Erik Hedeon was called as pastor of three congregations, Mamrelund, Nest Lake, and Lake Florida. He served until 1879.

The Home Mission Picture as of 1870

The year 1870 gives us an opportunity to take a look at the general situation of the Minnesota Conference and particularly its home mission work. This date is not chosen arbitrarily because it begins a new decade, but for three other reasons which are of more significance: This was the year when the Norwegian congregations withdrew to form their own church body; it was in this year that the Minnesota Conference first established subdivisions called districts; and a new home mission set-up had its beginning in 1870.

Although the Conference had increased in membership in the years following the Civil War, the time of rapid growth was yet to come. In 1870 the Conference had thirty-five congregations with a total membership of 4,690 communicants. These members were almost exclusively rural people. The congregations in St. Paul and Minneapolis were very small, less than 100 members in each city. Red Wing had 271 members, St. Peter had 179. The largest congregation in the Conference was Chisagö Lake, with 600 members; the second was Vasa with 486; the third was East Union with 450. The Conference must be classified as almost entirely rural throughout the pioneer period. The average size of the congregations in 1870 was 134 communicants.

At a Conference meeting held in St. Paul in September, 1870 it was decided to establish four districts, with names and boundaries as follows:

1. Goodhue district, including the congregations in Goodhue county and down along the Mississippi. (Nine congregations, four pastors.)
2. St. Paul district, including congregations in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and in the Rum River valley and the St. Croix valley. (Eight congregations, four pastors.)
3. Minnesota Valley district, including the congregations along the Minnesota River. (Six congregations, three pastors.)
4. Pacific district, including congregations along the first division of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (Great Northern). (Twelve congregations, four pastors.)

It may be of interest to take a brief glance at the list of congrega-

tions, pastors, and membership as the picture presented itself in 1870 when the first districts were organized:

| GOODHUE | | | ST. PAUL | | |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Church</i> | <i>Members</i> | <i>Pastor</i> | <i>Church</i> | <i>Members</i> | <i>Pastor</i> |
| Vasa | 486 | J. Magny (Asst.) | Chisago Lake | 600 | C. A. Hedengran |
| Red Wing | 271 | P. Sjöblom | St. Paul | 45* | Vacant |
| Cannon River | 40* | Vacant | Marine (Scandia) | 282 | L. O. Lindh |
| Spring Garden | 131 | C. O. Cavallin | Taylors Falls | 39 | C. A. Hedengran |
| Stockholm, Wisc. | 76 | Vacant | Minneapolis (Aug.) | 21* | Vacant |
| Lake City | 43 | Vacant | Cambridge | 122 | J. Auslund |
| Goodhue | 29 | E. Norelius | Fish Lake | 77 | J. Auslund |
| Long Creek | 31 | Vacant | Trade Lake, Wisc. | 72 | Vacant |
| Minneiska | 32 | Vacant | (Travelling missionary) | | P. A. Cederstam |
| 9 | 1139 | 4 | 8 | 1258 | 4 |

| MINNESOTA VALLEY | | | PACIFIC | | |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <i>Church</i> | <i>Members</i> | <i>Pastor</i> | <i>Church</i> | <i>Members</i> | <i>Pastor</i> |
| East Union | 450 | P. Carlson | Watertown | 159 | J. S. Nilson |
| West Union | 366 | A. Jackson | Nest Lake | 108 | J. P. Lundblad |
| Scandian Grove | 174 | J. Pehrson | Mooers Prairie | 234 | J. G. Lagerstrom |
| St. Peter | 179 | Vacant | Carlslund | 59 | J. S. Nilson |
| Vista | 74 | Vacant | Oscar Lake | 100* | Vacant |
| New Sweden | 68 | J. Pehrson | Tripolis | 45 | P. Beckman |
| 6 | 1211 | 3 | Cokato | 60* | Vacant |
| | | | N. Crow River | 50* | Vacant |
| | | | Brush Prairie | 25* | Vacant |
| | | | Gennessee (Atwater) | 94 | P. Beckman |
| | | | Beckville | 47 | P. Beckman |
| | | | Mamrelund (Pennock) | 101 | J. P. Lundblad |
| | | | 12 | 1082 | 4 |

* Estimated.

The Minnesota Conference had set for itself the task of bringing into its membership the Swedish immigrants in Minnesota. Although the Conference had succeeded in gathering in 4,690 adult members, practically all of them Swedish, yet the fact remains that this was only a fraction of the Swedish immigrants who had settled in Minnesota. The home mission task had been too great for the Conference with its very limited resources and man power. Other church denominations had claimed some of the people. The Baptists were strong in many places. But large numbers were without the ministrations of the Church.

Beginning in 1870 the home mission activities were somewhat more extensive. In 1871 twelve new congregations were added to the Conference; in 1872 eleven; in 1873 ten; in 1874 nine; and in 1875 eight.

The pioneer home missionary did not even know the word "technique." During the first years the Minnesota Conference had no organized system or method of supervising the home mission work. The Conference conventions were very largely taken up with discussions about vacant congregations and new fields, and pastors were asked to visit this or that place if and when they could find time. As the work expanded it became evident that some more orderly and systematic method was needed. The Synod had a Mission Committee, but a large part of the work was nevertheless under the direct supervision of the Conferences. The Minnesota Conference petitioned for the right to use within its own boundaries all contributions given for home missions by the congregations of the Conference. The Synodical Mission Committee granted this request, and the Conference at its meeting in January 1870 took action as follows relative to the home mission work:

"That Pastors E. Norelius and P. Sjöblom be elected to constitute a committee, to serve until the first conference meeting in 1871, to guide our home mission activity, receive the contributions given for this purpose in the various places in the Conference, and which are to be sent in quarterly, and also other contributions given for this purpose; correspond with the travelling missionaries and counsel with them, pay them their salaries, report to the Conference at its meetings and before the next synodical convention report to the Swedish Mission Committee of the Augustana Synod.

"That Pastor P. A. Cederstam be called as travelling missionary to work among the countrymen principally in the St. Croix Valley until the next Conference meeting, unless the Mission Committee should find it necessary to determine otherwise, and his salary is set at \$600.00, whereof the Conference shall pay \$400.00 from its home mission funds and Pastor E. Norelius kindly has promised to secure \$200.00.

"That the travelling missionary try to get collections or other voluntary gifts at the places he visits, said contributions to be accounted for to the Home Mission Committee."

Cederstam served as travelling missionary from January, 1870 to July 1872. During these two and a half years he travelled incessantly, visited a large number of places, and organized several new congregations.

The Synod in 1870 adopted a plan for the establishment of a Central Board of Missions, consisting of four pastors and four laymen, to have charge of all home mission work in the Synod. Each Conference was to be a home mission district, and the Conference president was to serve as the representative of the Board in his Conference, together with two pastors and two laymen elected by the Conference.

The very next year—1871—the Minnesota Conference asked the Synod for the right to take complete charge of the home mission work in its own area, and this request was granted, with the stipulation that the Conference report to the Central Board annually. In December, 1871 the Conference home mission committee had gradually developed into a Conference executive committee. Norelius was Conference president at the time, and Peter Sjöblom's organizing genius was beginning to make itself felt.

From this time the home mission work became more and more definitely a Conference activity, and remained such until 1938 when the present Synodical home mission plan was adopted.

Home Missions, 1870-1875

Immigration into Minnesota had become heavy in the late 'sixties, both from abroad and from the older areas of the United States. Several reasons can be given for this. The Indians had ceded all their land in Minnesota, and most of them had been moved out of the state, except for some small reservations. The homestead law had been adopted, giving land free to settlers. Railroads were being extended, connecting St. Paul and Minneapolis with Chicago, with Duluth, and with the outlying sections of the state. The milling industry was expanding and Minnesota flour was becoming famous in the large eastern markets. Wheat was king in Minnesota. The logging industry was booming. Cities were expanding.

At the same time multitudes in Europe were suffering hardship because of crop failures. In southern Sweden real famine conditions prevailed in 1868 and 1869. In view of these facts it is not surprising that 21,472 persons emigrated from Sweden to the United States in 1868 and 32,050 in 1869. Almost ninety per cent of these came from the rural districts of Sweden and it was natural that the greatest number of them would seek to settle on farms in this country, especially since the government offered a 160 acre homestead free to those who would stay and cultivate the land.

Many of the Swedish immigrants arriving in Minnesota in this period settled in the old, established communities where large numbers of their countrymen were already living. Chisago, Washington, Isanti, Goodhue, Nicollet, and Carver counties were among the favorites, and Wright, Meeker, Kandiyohi, Swift, and Douglas were not far behind. Then we find settlers going out into Renville, Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, and Big Stone counties; into Watonwan, Cottonwood, Redwood, and Murray counties; up into Pine, Carlton, and St. Louis counties; and into Wisconsin, in the counties of Polk, Burnett, and Douglas. Not until the late 'seventies was there any considerable increase in the number of Swedish immigrants in Minneapolis and St. Paul. For example, there were only 174 Johnsons listed in the Minneapolis city directory in 1874 in a total population of about 30,000.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Minnesota Conference organized four districts in 1870. There were fifteen pastors. One of these, P. A. Cederstam, had a regular call from the Conference to serve as travelling missionary. Most of the other pastors also served as missionaries in their respective areas. Some of the accounts written by these men have been published or are still found in the form of original manuscripts. These accounts often tell the elemental story of the beginnings of the Lutheran Church in the respective communities, and for this reason we include several of these missionary reports written by such men as Norelius, Cederstam, Beckman, Magny, and others.

During the years 1870 to 1875 the following congregations were added to the Minnesota Conference, in the respective districts:

Goodhue district: 1870, Lake City, Goodhue, Long Creek (Millville), Minneiska; 1871, Cannon Falls, Hastings; 1873, Little Plum, Wisconsin; 1874, Welch.

St. Paul district: 1870, Trade Lake, Wisconsin; 1871, Duluth, St. Francis, Rush Lake; and Superior, Wisconsin; 1872, Stillwater, Ham Lake; and Bethesda (Sand Lake) Wisconsin; 1873, Anoka, Brainerd; and Balsam, Wisconsin; 1874, Midway, Maple Ridge (Dalbo); and West Sweden, Wisconsin; 1875, Marine (village), Bethlehem, Minneapolis, Spring Lake (North Branch).

Minnesota Valley district: 1871, Sveadahl, Belgrade; and Ahlsburg and Dahlsburg, Dakota Territory; 1872, Clear Lake; 1873, Scandia, (Sillerud), Jordan, Plum Creek (Walnut Grove), Jemtland (Worthington), and Kansas Lake; 1874, Little Cottonwood (Comfrey), and Union Creek, Dakota Territory; 1875, New Prairie (Sacred Heart).

Pacific district: 1870, Cokato, North Crow River, Brush Prairie (McLeod county), Gennese (Atwater), Beckville, Mamrelund (Pennock); 1871, Fahlun, Lake Ida, and Norunga, all in Douglas county, and Silver Creek, Wright county; 1872, Upsala and Eksjö in Becker county, Eagle Lake, Ottertail county, Fryksände, Wenersborg, and Christina in Douglas county, and Svea, Kandiyohi county; 1873, Swedesburg (Waverly); 1874, Florida (Kandiyohi county), Steelsville (Meeker county), Swedelunds (Becker county), and Parkers Prairie; 1875, Swede Grove (Grove City), Litchfield, Lekvatten and Christvalla (Douglas county).

The totals for the period included in the above list are as follows: Goodhue district seven, all of which are still in existence; St. Paul district, eighteen, of which sixteen are still in existence; Minnesota Valley

district, thirteen, twelve of which are still in existence, though one was reorganized; Pacific district, twenty-six, of which ten still belong to the Minnesota Conference, eleven to the Red River Valley Conference, and the others have been dissolved or merged.

The total for the entire Conference was sixty-four new congregations, of which fifty-seven are still in existence, some of them very small and barely able to maintain their organization, but many of them having grown to be congregations of considerable size, which in turn have branched out into other new congregations.

In general, the area of the Conference, as it exists today, had been fairly well established by 1875, except for the fact that the home mission work of the Conference continued to extend all through the Red River valley and North Dakota, and into the prairie provinces of Canada, until the Red River Valley Conference was organized in 1912 and the Canada Conference in 1913. The general pattern or method of home missions as established prior to 1875 continued in vogue for fifty years. This method called for travelling missionaries who sought the Swedish people in the new settlements along the railroads as they extended westward and northward. In most of the new congregations it was found impossible to get an ordained resident pastor at once. Lay preachers and students served the new places and the missionary or some other pastor made occasional visits to baptize, confirm, give communion, and to give counsel and aid in the purchase of church lots

Foreign Born in Chisago County

| Year | Total Popula- tion | Foreign | | Born | Whites | |
|------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|
| | | Total Number | % of Total Pop. | Sweden | | Norway |
| | | | | Number | % of Total Population | Number |
| 1860 | 1729 | 734 | | (558) | (32.3) | 11 |
| 1870 | 4309 | 2164 | 50.2 | 1670 | 38.7 | 4 |
| 1880 | 7982 | 3965 | 49.8 | 3122 | 39.1 | 38 |
| 1890 | 10359 | 4746 | 45.8 | 3955 | 38.2 | 50 |
| 1900 | 13248 | 5018 | 37.9 | 4215 | 31.8 | 69 |
| 1910 | 13537 | 4455 | 32.9 | 3760 | 27.8 | 89 |
| 1920 | 14445 | 3806 | 26.3 | 3236 | 22.4 | 92 |
| 1930 | 13189 | 2733 | 20.8 | 2319 | 17.6 | 94 |

Helge Nelson, *The Swedish Settlements in the U. S.*

and erection of churches and parsonages. In addition to the full time missionaries (and these were always few in number) both Conference and Synod adopted resolutions from time to time asking each pastor to spend one month per year as a missionary out in the new fields or wherever his services might be needed. Though there never was one hundred per cent cooperation in this plan, it is nevertheless a fact that many home mission fields were given at least a modicum of attention in this way, whereas otherwise they would have had none and would have been lost from the Minnesota Conference and perhaps lost from the church entirely. Very few of these four week "vacation trips" by the pioneer pastors were depicted in print for the benefit of posterity, but enough has been published in the church press of that day so we may obtain material for meditation and inspiration if we take time to read and to trace their journeys on the map.

Shortly after the Civil War Minnesota Conference pastors reached the Red River Valley. In the early 'seventies they crossed the border into Dakota Territory. In the early 'eighties they reached the northern boundary of Minnesota, and soon crossed the boundary to begin mission work in Canada. A Minnesota pastor was also the first Lutheran to preach the Word in Montana (Norelius in 1882), and when Peter Carlson was nearing the age of sixty, instead of planning how to retire gracefully, he accepted the Synod's call, in 1879, to go to the Oregon country and begin home mission work in a field which he described as a den of lions.

Foreign Born in Isanti County

| Year | Total Popula- tion | Foreign | | Born | Whites | |
|------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|
| | | Total Number | % of Total Pop. | Sweden | | Norway |
| | | | | Number | % of Total Population | Number |
| 1860 | 284 | 96 | 33.8 | | | |
| 1870 | 2035 | 1170 | 57.5 | 991 | 48.7 | 3 |
| 1880 | 5063 | 2693 | 53.2 | 2341 | 46.2 | 24 |
| 1890 | 7607 | 3812 | 50.1 | 2758 | 36.1 | 29 |
| 1900 | 11675 | 4812 | 41.2 | 4307 | 36.9 | 81 |
| 1910 | 12615 | 4443 | 35.2 | 3941 | 31.2 | 83 |
| 1920 | 13278 | 3643 | 27.4 | 3184 | 24.0 | 102 |
| 1930 | 12081 | 2582 | 21.4 | 2165 | 17.9 | 88 |

Helge Nelson, *The Swedish Settlements in the U. S.*

Many of the pioneer Minnesota pastors, in fact, most of them were men with rather meager education. But this did not prevent them from being faithful in their ministry, unselfish, willing to work and to endure hardship as good soldiers of Christ Jesus. Cederstam, Hedengran, Carlson, Beckman, all were men with very limited education, but their faithfulness and willingness cannot be questioned, and these qualities have always been necessary for the home missionary.

In the list of congregations given above the dates refer to admittance into the Synod and Conference, not the date of organization of the church. In the following chapters we shall attempt to trace in somewhat greater detail the beginnings of these various congregations, as we follow the paths of the home missionaries in the four respective districts.

Goodhue District, 1870-1875

The Goodhue district was well established several years before any formal organization of the district took place in 1870. It is not difficult to see the results of Norelius' activity in that region. Pastors were secured for that area more readily and in general they stayed more permanently, than in other parts of the Conference. Of the five pastors in 1858, three were in Goodhue county.

There seems to have been a district consciousness earlier in Goodhue than anywhere else. This also is due in large part to the work and the vision of Norelius. On July 4, 1866 a great community celebration was held in Vasa, combining the patriotic theme and the mission of the church in this country. People came from all the churches in the Goodhue area, brought lunch and stayed all day, listened to a program in the forenoon, and in the afternoon organized "The Lutheran Mission Society of Goodhue County."

However, as to the future growth and development the Goodhue region was the most limited, for the simple reason that the land around there was settled early and there was no room for later expansion. The Goodhue district of today consists of the same congregations that it had about 1875 or 1880, with one or two exceptions.

As we have mentioned above, eight new congregations were added to the Goodhue district in the early 'seventies. (Four of these were organized in the fall of 1869 and later admitted to the Conference.)

In the section on Cannon River (Chapter 8) we have made reference to settlement by Swedes in and around Cannon Falls. Most of the early settlers were rural people, and therefore the congregation was organized and a church built several miles from Cannon Falls. Services were held in the village occasionally by Norelius, Beckman, and others. A congregation, St. Ansgar's, was organized on August 15, 1869, with P. A. Cederstam as chairman and Norelius as secretary, with seventeen families and one single man as charter members. The first deacons were: Gustaf Westman, A. P. Johnson, and John Mattson; the first trustees were John Mattson, Otto Johnson, and Gustaf Widerstrom. A school house was used as a meeting place the first few years, until a church was built in 1872. Rev. S. F. Westerdahl was the first pastor, serving there 1870-1871, after which Jonas Magny

served five years, while he also travelled extensively as Conference missionary.

Zion congregation, Goodhue, was organized on October 31, 1869. While J. P. C. Boren was living in Goodhue county, a few miles south of Vasa, he organized a little congregation called Svithiod. After he moved to Stockholm, Wisconsin in 1864 the congregation was merged with Vasa. In 1869, under the leadership of Norelius it was again organized as a separate congregation, under the name Zion, and Norelius served as its pastor for forty-six years. From this congregation came C. W. Foss, who served as professor at Augustana College for many years, a man whose labors as teacher and writer have greatly enriched the Augustana Synod.

Peter Sjöblom arrived in Red Wing in the spring of 1869 and in the fall of that year he organized three new congregations farther down the Mississippi: Lake City, Millville, and Minneiska.

Lake City had been in existence since the early 'fifties, but there were no Swedish settlers until the late 'sixties. Among these was L. A. Hocanzon who later became a pastor. Under his leadership (while yet a layman) some of the Swedish people in Lake City met on September 24, 1869, and adopted a motion to the effect that a meeting would be held on October 10 for the purpose of organizing a congregation under the guidance of Rev. Peter Sjöblom of Red Wing. This meeting was held as planned, and thirty-six persons joined as charter members. A church was built in 1875. No resident pastor was secured until 1880. In the meantime the congregation was served by neighboring pastors, and by L. A. Hocanzon as lay leader.

Millville, originally called Long Creek, is situated eighteen miles from Lake City. Peter Hultin was the first Swedish settler here. A congregation, consisting of eighteen charter members, was organized at the Swen Ericson home on September 9, 1869, under the leadership of Sjöblom.

Another small congregation of fifteen members was organized at Minneiska, thirty miles from Lake City, on November 9, 1869, under Sjöblom's leadership.

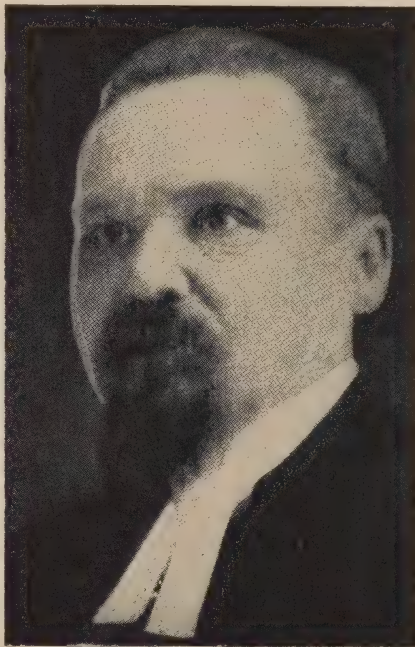
North of Vasa the Lutheran settlement spread in the 'sixties until there was a considerable population in that area, and Norelius went there for services occasionally. This led to the organization of the Welch congregation under the leadership of Norelius on December 29, 1873. There were fifty-six charter members.

Across the river from Red Wing, in Hager City, Wisconsin, Sjö-

blom organized a congregation on March 18, 1875, with thirty-four charter members. Most of them had belonged to the congregation in Red Wing, but asked to have a congregation organized in their own community. Sjöblom served as their pastor for three years. A church was built in 1877.

Hastings is now included in the St. Paul district, but from 1871 to 1904 it belonged to the Goodhue district. The congregation was organized on March 12, 1871 by Rev. Jonas Magny, who then was serving as assistant pastor in Vasa. Hastings is one of the oldest towns in the state west of the Mississippi, having been founded in the early 1850's. The first Lutheran settlers came some time before 1860, among them being a Swedish wagonmaker, John Östergren (Estergren). When the first services were held by a Lutheran pastor is not known. In June 1864 the Conference gave Norelius and Beckman the responsibility of visiting Hastings. It is probable that one or both of them had preached

there prior to this time. At various times through the following years the Conference sent pastors to visit the place, but no regular services were held there in the 'sixties. When Cederstam became travelling missionary in January, 1870 his very first service was held in Hastings. This was on January 4. The service was held in a home and the attendance was so large that Cederstam felt there was a great need of having a larger place where meetings could be held. When the congregation was organized in 1871 thirty-three charter members were enrolled. The first deacons were J. Nelson and G. Lindquist; trustees, John Estergren, Fred Johnson, N. P. Lindquist, and G. Oberg. Rev. J. Magny served the church the first years. A church was built 1874.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. C. O. Cavallin

St. Paul District, 1870-1875

While the Goodhue district has remained practically the same in extent and in the number of congregations, the St. Paul district has been changed greatly. The area which at first was included in the St. Paul district now constitutes nine districts: St. Paul, Minneapolis, Chisago, Apple River, St. Croix, Mille Lacs, Carlton, Lake Superior, and Duluth. It was a large district, and one of the congregations in the district (Chisago Lake) was the largest in the Conference. But of all the four districts established in 1870, the St. Paul district was the most unwieldy. There could not be much cohesiveness in a district of this kind, but it was a necessary arrangement for the time being, and as new congregations were organized and more pastors came the district was divided. The first division was in 1887, when the Chisago and Duluth districts were organized.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, a large number of congregations were organized in the St. Paul district in the early 'seventies, largely through the activities of the travelling missionary, P. A. Cederstam, who worked in that area from January 1, 1870 to July 1, 1872. Perhaps his principal accomplishment during this period was the establishment of a congregation in Duluth, the first Augustana group in that city.

Following the district lines familiar to the church members of to-day we shall summarize briefly the developments in the home mission fields in the early 'seventies.

In the city of St. Paul there was at that time only one congregation, the First Lutheran, and at that time it was a very small congregation, with less than fifty members in 1870. Five years later it had reached a membership of 256, and soon after this mission work was begun in the Arlington Hill district. But no new congregation was established in St. Paul until 1889, when the Gustavus Adolphus church was organized.

Minneapolis belonged to the St. Paul district, and for a time Augustana, Minneapolis, and First, St. Paul, constituted a parish served by one pastor. Beginning with C. A. Evald's pastorate in Augustana there



PHOTO COURTESY BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, MINNEAPOLIS

Bethlehem Lutheran, Minneapolis, Original Church, Built 1875 on Tenth Street North, Later Moved to Sixth Street, Between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues North, and used Until 1888.

was a rapid growth and development, and it was not long until a daughter congregation came into existence, the Bethlehem congregation in north Minneapolis, organized September 25, 1874. Shortly after beginning his ministry in Augustana in 1873 Dr. Evald began to investigate the need of church work on the north side of the city. The result was that a mission was begun, services were conducted and a congregation was organized, consisting of eight families. The first deacons elected were Gust Appelgren, Nels Bergstrom, and C. P. Peterson; trustees were Louis Dahl, Gust Appelgren, and Nels Bergstrom. At the very first meeting it was decided to build a church as soon as the necessary funds could be obtained. The work was begun in 1875. The first church was on Tenth Street North, but this was found unsuitable and it was later moved to Sixth Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues. Two new churches have been built since then, and each time a new site has been chosen, each time a little farther north than the previous one.

Earlier than Bethlehem in Minneapolis a congregation had come into being at Anoka. While J. G. Sjöquist was in Augustana Church he had made a few visits to Anoka to conduct services, and he served



PHOTO COURTESY BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, MINNEAPOLIS

Interior of Original Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

as chairman at the meeting on February 11, 1870, at the home of Jonas Norell, when the Zion Lutheran congregation was organized. Five families and four single persons were charter members. The first board members were J. Norell, J. Edsberg, and P. Edlund, deacons; Andrew Peterson, Olof Peterson, and J. Norell, trustees. No resident pastor was secured for a number of years, but a church was built in 1873. Jonas Magny visited Anoka on some of his mission journeys. In one of his reports he lamented the fact that Anoka was so far from other Augustana congregations and therefore difficult to serve.

A small congregation was organized in St. Francis township, Anoka county, in 1871. It formed a part of the Anoka parish. After an existence of about twenty-five years it dwindled away.

The only rural congregation in the present Minneapolis district, Ham Lake, was organized in 1872 by Rev. J. Auslund. The first church board members were Andrew Holmquist, N. J. Anderson, John Johnson, Olof Peterson, J. P. Magnuson, and Peter Johnson. The congregation was served in its early years by pastors from St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The present Chisago district includes nine congregations. Only three of these were organized prior to 1870, Chisago Lake, Scandia, and Taylors Falls. Three were organized between 1870 and 1875, Stillwater, Chisago City, and Marine.

Stillwater is one of the oldest towns in the state, having been established as a sawmill town in 1844. In the early 1850's Swedish immigrants began to settle there, to work in the lumber mills, and the young women as servants in the homes of the well-to-do Americans. The first Swedish immigrant family was Swen Peterson Smith. Coming to America in 1853 they stayed in Chicago where they lost four children in the cholera epidemic of 1854. The next year the family moved to Stillwater and Mr. Smith died shortly after he came. The widow became proprietor of a well patronized boarding house. In this house Norelius and Boren stayed over night on their way to the first Conference meeting in 1858. This was the usual gathering place for the Swedish population in Stillwater and here they had their services when pastors happened to come along. Among those who preached there were Erland Carlsson, P. A. Cederstam, P. Beckman, Eric Norelius, A. Jackson, and L. O. Lindh. Although a sort of church society existed in Stillwater probably as early as the 'fifties, no legally organized congregation was established until 1871, when Cederstam, travelling missionary for the Conference, made frequent visits to Stillwater and led in the organizing of a congregation on July 18. Andrew Olson was the first secretary and seems to have been the most active leader of the church in its early years. Thirty-four communicants were enrolled as charter members. Mrs. P. Larson is said to have been the one who got Cederstam to visit Stillwater and she was among the most zealous in her efforts to get a congregation organized. No resident pastor was secured until 1877 when Rev. A. F. Tornell came. Prior to that time the congregation had occasional services when Cederstam, Auslund, or other pastors visited Stillwater.

The Chisago City congregation is a "daughter" of the one at Center City and it was not without some sorrow and perhaps even opposition that the mother church saw the first steps taken by the daughter.

Chisago Lake was first settled in 1851, and for the first twenty years the Chisago Lake settlement was understood to include a large area, almost the entire southern half of Chisago county. Many of the members of the Chisago Lake church lived in the villages of Lindstrom and Chisago City, which are two and five miles, respectively, from Center City. In the 'seventies, as Chisago City was developing into a fair sized village, some of the church members living in and around that vicinity began to take action to form a new congregation. The leader in this movement was Otto Wallmark, one of the earliest settlers in the com-

munity. He had received a fair education in Sweden and he held various positions in Chisago City, including those of postmaster, village treasurer, and county commissioner. In 1861 he was elected county auditor and held the position without interruption for eighteen years. Later he served in the state senate. He was also a leader in the affairs of the Minnesota Conference, serving on the College board and on various committees.

With him as chairman the Zion Lutheran Church of Chisago City was organized on May 14, 1874. Forty-eight families became charter members. No pastor was present at the organization meeting, nor at the two following meetings, when the congregation discussed matters pertaining to calling a pastor and building a church.

In 1875 the Chisago City congregation applied for admittance to the Synod. The Synod had a rule that a new congregation should not be organized in the vicinity of an existing Augustana congregation. The question was raised as to whether Chisago City had violated this rule, and Pastors J. J. Frodeen, the newly elected pastor of Chisago Lake, and J. Auslund of St. Paul were chosen as a committee to investigate this matter. They were given authority to receive the congregation without further action by Synod if they deemed it right and proper. The congregation was received the same year, and was listed as having a membership of 112 communicants. The first resident pastor was E. J. Werner who came in 1880. Prior to that time services were conducted by neighboring pastors.

Marine-on-St. Croix, originally called Marine Mills, was the first sawmill town in Minnesota. In the farming country north and west of the village Swedish Lutheran settlers began to take up land in 1851, and a congregation was organized in 1854. It was known as the Marine congregation at first, but is now known as Elim, Scandia (Chapter 5).

A congregation was organized in the village of Marine Mills on April 14, 1872. Most of the charter members were families belonging to the Scandia church. They asked permission to withdraw and organize a congregation of their own and the request was unanimously granted. The pastor, L. O. Lindh, was present and led in the organization. Forty-two communicants became charter members. A church was built the same year. During the first ten years the new congregation formed a parish together with Scandia.

The present Apple River district, now consisting of twenty-six congregations, all in Wisconsin, began to be a Minnesota Conference

mission field in 1869. At a Conference meeting in September of that year Pastors Lagerstrom and Lindh were asked to visit the settlements in Burnett and Polk counties, Wisconsin, before the next Conference meeting. Cederstam, on his first journey as travelling missionary in January 1870 drove with his horse from Chisago Lake up to Trade Lake, where a new settlement had come into existence in 1868. During the spring he made several visits to the community, conducting services in the homes of the settlers. On the 8th of May, after services in the Andrew Johnson home south of Trade Lake the Zion Lutheran congregation was organized. Cederstam served as chairman of the meeting and Carl Anderson as secretary. Thirty-four charter members were listed in the church book. The first deacons were John Asker, Ryss P. Person, Carl E. Davidson, Räf M. Olson, Andrew Johnson, and A. G. Hellgren. The first trustees were John Davidson, Andrew G. Johnson, and Olof Gabrielson.

A Norwegian Lutheran pastor, O. Olson, serving a church in Grantsburg, was called to serve the Trade Lake congregation together with his own. The Conference stationed a theological student, Magnus Spongberg, in the new congregation for the summer. No resident pastor was called until 1877, when Rev. F. Peterson became their pastor. Services were held in the homes and in a school house until 1875, when the first church was built.

On account of the poor roads in the community and the difficulty of getting to the services, a part of the Trade Lake congregation decided in 1873 to organize a new congregation. A meeting for this purpose was held in a schoolhouse on June 24 with Rev. O. Olson as chairman and F. O. Johnson as secretary. The new congregation was named West Sweden. There were fifty-nine charter members. The first church board members were: Deacons, F. O. Johnson, Johannes Dalin, C. G. Grehm, Johannes Swenson, R. P. Peterson, and Per Erik Person; trustees, N. P. Johnson, A. C. Hultin, John Wood Peterson, J. Bjork, Anders Larson, and Anders Dalberg. A church was built some years later. West Sweden was together with Trade Lake as a parish.

Directly across the St. Croix River from the Chisago Lake colony and the village of Taylors Falls lay Polk county, Wisconsin, with opportunities for settlement, but it was not until 1868 that the first Swedish Lutheran settlers moved into that region. Peter S. Weinhardt and the two brothers, John P. and Peter P. Welander, and Andrew Chinander came in 1868. Others arrived in 1869 and the following years.

Many of these early settlers had lived in the Chisago Lake community for a time, and they soon sent a request to the pastor there, C. A. Hedengran, asking him to conduct services. At this time Cederstam was living in Chisago Lake while serving as travelling missionary, and he came to the new community and held services at the Weinhardt home on November 17, 1871. The question of organizing a congregation was then taken up, and it was decided to interview the people in the community and get the signatures of those who desired to join. The following spring, April 21, 1872, Rev. Cederstam organized the Bethesda Lutheran congregation with sixty-one communicants. The first deacons were Peter S. Weinhardt, Carl Englund, and John Elmquist; the first trustees were Gustaf Nelson, Carl Englund, and Otto Johnson. On May 9 the congregation met and issued a call to Cederstam to become their pastor. He accepted this call and served there until 1874, during which time a little log church was built near East Lake. It was later (1876) moved to Sand Lake, where a new church was built ten years later. A. F. Tornell of Taylors Falls served as pastor 1874-1878.

About the same time as the Sand Lake community was being settled, other families moved into the regions around Balsam Lake, some eleven miles farther east. Among the settlers in this community was a man by the name of Jens Isakson, who had served as colporteur in Sweden. He became the spiritual leader of the community in the early years. Cederstam, on his home mission travels, came also to this community and on November 21, 1872, led in the organizing of the Balsam Lutheran congregation. This meeting was held in the log cabin home of Johannes Humble. The congregation was united with Sand Lake as a parish, and was served by Cederstam 1872-1874 and by Tornell 1874-1878.

In the present St. Croix district two congregations had been organized in the 1860's, Cambridge (1864) and Fish Lake (1867). During the early 'seventies three more were organized: Rush Lake (Calvary, Rush Point) (1870); Maple Ridge (Salem Dalbo) (1874); and Spring Lake (1874).

The little Rusheby congregation organized by Hedengran in 1860 (Chapter 13) soon vanished. New settlers came a few years later, and the Rush Lake Lutheran congregation was organized on November 22, 1870, at the home of Anders Wicksner, under the leadership of Rev. Jonas Auslund of Cambridge. He had visited the settlement several

Brainerd in 1874

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times before this. The first deacons were Erik Kardell, Nils J. Eklund, and Jonas Schön. The new congregation was combined with Fish Lake as a parish for a number of years, but no resident pastor was secured until 1880. The first church was built 1873.

Spring Lake, five miles from North Branch, was first settled in 1864 when Carl H. Youngquist and his family and his father-in-law, Nils Peterson, moved to this community from Chisago Lake where they had lived nine years. In 1866 and 1867 Jonas Erickson and J. P. Dahl came to Spring Lake and others came in the following years.

When the Fish Lake congregation was organized in 1867 these pioneers around Spring Lake became members, with the understanding that services should be held in both places, and there should be a cemetery in each place. As the Spring Lake colony developed in the 'seventies, the people wanted a congregation of their own, and it was organized on August 3, 1874, with C. H. Youngquist as chairman of the meeting. Forty-six families belonging to the Fish Lake congregation became charter members of the Spring Lake church. The first board members elected were: Deacons, H. E. Dahlman, J. O. Dahl, and Johannes Steffanson; trustees, Gustaf Samuelson, Carl Erikson, and J. P. Dahl. During the first thirteen years Spring Lake formed a part of the Fish Lake parish. N. J. Brink was the pastor.

The present Mille Lacs district with its twenty-four congregations, was not even thought of as a mission field until after 1870. The entire

region was a vast forest area where lumbering was practically the only industry. Brainerd was established as a village in 1871 when the Northern Pacific was built. A Lutheran congregation was organized some time in 1872 and admitted into the Synod the following year. (The historical booklet "After Fifty Years" says: "From the records we learn that in March, 1873, a number of Swedish Lutherans gathered under a Pastor Govlander's direction to organize a church. They met at the home of Nils Lofstam but no permanent organization was effected.") However, the Synodical records show that in 1873 the Brainerd congregation was admitted to membership, and in the Mission Committee's report the following mention is made of it: "The Conference has three outlying home mission fields which it is trying to serve to some extent, namely (a) the field along the Northern Pacific Railroad. This field extends from Lake Superior on the east to the Red River in the west. Yes, one could say it extends all the way to the Missouri River, as new settlements spring up along the line as it is being built westward. On this field we already have some mission congregations organized, in Superior, Wisconsin, Duluth, Brainerd, Upsala, and Eksjö in Minnesota; and there are many other places where Swedes have settled but no congregations have yet been organized. . . . Only one pastor, E. N. Jörlander, is stationed on these fields. In addition, the following pastors have served a longer or shorter time in the Conference mission: P. A. Cederstam, P. Beckman, L. A. Hocanzon, P. Carlsson, J. Auslund, A. F. Tornell, J. G. Lagerstrom, A. Engdahl, and the lay preacher M. Egbom, whereby the various mission fields have been visited."

During the first years Brainerd evidently received very infrequent visits and the congregation had to be reorganized 1882.

The beginnings of the home mission work in the Duluth-Superior area will be covered in a separate chapter.

Duluth and Superior

The "Lake that is Superior" was discovered about three centuries ago by Frenchmen coming up from eastern Canada. The exact date is somewhat uncertain but it was some time in the 1650's. The lake became a highway for the fur trade, from the latter part of the 1600's and until well into the 1800's, a period of about a century and a half.

It was in 1679 that Daniel Greysolon, the Sieur Du Luth first landed at the head of the lake. Little could he have dreamt of the city that would be there some day, bearing his name. All through the fur trading era no one could realize that Lake Superior would become a great channel for the transport of iron ore, and that the twin ports of Duluth and Superior would handle a commerce greater than most ocean ports.

Except for fur trading posts and Indian missions there were no white men settled around the head of the lake until the lumbering era began in that region. In 1854 the Chippewa ceded their lands in north-eastern Minnesota, and the logging industry soon moved in. In that year the first attempts were made to build a road from Lake Superior to Stillwater.

Duluth experienced a sudden boom in its infancy, but when the 1857 panic hit Minnesota the decline was even more sudden. After the Civil War the Philadelphia financier, Jay Cooke, began to plan for a railroad from Lake Superior to the Pacific coast, having obtained an immense grant of land for his project. In 1869 Duluth became a boom town again, as Cooke's agents were busy recruiting workmen for the building of his railroad, and another railroad, the Lake Superior and Mississippi, was being built between Duluth and St. Paul.

We have a graphic description of Duluth and its environs, and the hardships of immigrants arriving there in those days, in an account written by J. A. Krantz, who came as a twelve-year-old boy together with his parents to Duluth in 1869:

"Many workers were needed for the (railroad) project, and recruiters were sent out in all directions to persuade men to come to Duluth. These recruiting agents had also come to Chicago, where Swedish immigrants generally were gathered together. Among these

were the A. P. Krantz family, who however had in mind to continue their journey to Andover, Illinois, where Rev. Jonas Swenson, a good friend of theirs from Sweden, was pastor at the time. The recruiters promised good wages, steady work, and free transportation and board from Chicago across the lakes. The result was that several agreed to go and were to ship on the steamer *Norman*. This boat was the first one that year to plow the waves of Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. But as they took on board more passengers than they had counted on, they found after a few days that the provisions would not last for the entire voyage. When the boat stopped at Houghton, Michigan, there was a shipment of flour in barrels which was to be sent to Duluth for the work camps. When we set out on the lake again and felt the fresh breeze we could also feel the growing hunger. But there was no help for us, as there was no food to be had, and our only hope was to think of the goal of our journey and to imagine what was awaiting us when we arrived there safely. Our *Norman* is jolting along and seems to be as anxious as we are to get there in a hurry. After a day and a night we can see the place in the distance, and soon the boat is at land where the lake ends, or perhaps rather, begins. There was no dock at the place (at the foot of Fourth Avenue East), but they nailed together a temporary gangplank. First the passengers were allowed to go ashore, and then the flour barrels destined for Duluth were to be rolled down. Some of these did not go straight and the result was that some fell on the rocks below and broke. The hungry immigrants were allowed to gather up the flour that was spilled, and it was not long before one could see one fire after another along the shore. Father brought out the kettle which he had been thoughtful enough to bring along from home, and mother soon saw to it that we had some warm, appetizing gruel to eat. We children could hardly wait until the meal was ready to be served. What a tasty and wonderful dish it was! Never shall I forget my first meal in Minnesota down there at the lakeshore at Fourth Avenue East. And this was on midsummer day in 1869.

"At that time Duluth was a place on the map. The city consisted of seven houses, surrounded by an almost impenetrable forest of fir, cedar, maple, birch, etc. A small area near the lake had been cleared, and through the openings in the forest one could see the new and very primitive houses. Indians by the hundreds lived on Minnesota Point, at Spirit Lake, and back of the Duluth hills. Now the first concern for the immigrants was to try to get a roof over their heads, for of course

there were no houses to be had. By helping one another they soon had their log cabins ready to be occupied. They consisted of a small room, with one still smaller for use as kitchen. There we were packed in like Chinese on their shelves. We ate pork and beans in grand style, and thought we had indeed come to the promised land."

The Krantz family remained in Duluth only five years, but it was during these years that a beginning of Lutheran church work took place in the city. They were a churchly family and took a leading part in the new congregation that was established the following year. The son, J. A. Krantz, became a pastor, serving parishes in Duluth and several other places and also served for many years as president of the Minnesota Conference, and as superintendent of the Conference institutions of mercy.

In 1870 the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad gave Duluth a connection with the southern part of the state, and soon after that the Northern Pacific was completed out to the western part of the state, bringing much of the grain from the Red River Valley to be shipped

1 1 1

Invitation to Duluth

"This place is situated close to Superior City and is thus hard by Lake Superior and the St. Louis river. In the vicinity are several budding towns. The land lying close to the river is taken, the best land, however, remains unpossessed, since about four or five miles from the lake the best land for farming is located. It is overgrown with maple, linden, elm, oak, and other varieties. Around this town, where I am staying, the land is occupied in a radius of some three miles, but further out it is all open for settlement. If settlers care to go ten miles west from this place, they have the opportunity of securing good land surrounding a lake. I am unable to say how large the lake is, because I have never been there, but from reliable descriptions I judge that it is quite large.

"Together with a number of Swedes I have resided here for some years; and I intend to remain in hopes that our land will in time become more valuable than at any other place in Minnesota. At present times are hard here; but, according to daily accounts, the eastern states are hit just as hard, if not worse."

Letter written by a Mr. Swanstrom from Oneata, Minnesota, February 23, 1859, published in *Hemlandet* March 22, 1859, reprinted with translation in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America*, 1922-1923, P. 94-95.

east by way of the lakes. In spite of these activities, however, Duluth was only a village of 3,000 inhabitants in 1880. Then came the discovery of iron ore in northern Minnesota, and Duluth grew at an unbelievable rate. In ten years, 1880 to 1890, the population increased from 3,000 to 33,000. By 1930 there were over 100,000 people in Duluth.

The railroad between St. Paul and Duluth was completed on August 1, 1870, and before the end of that month the Minnesota Conference had made a beginning of home mission work there. The first Conference pastor to visit Duluth and Superior was P. A. Cederstam. We have already made reference to the fact that he was called by the Conference in January 1870 to be travelling missionary. On August 26 he went by train to Duluth, and on the following day began his efforts to establish a Lutheran congregation in that city. Some of his experiences were related in articles published in *Missionären*:

"On the 26th I set out on a journey which I had been thinking about for a long time, to Duluth at Lake Superior, and arrived there safely in the evening of the same day (the railroad from St. Paul has now been open for some time). On the following day I started out in the much talked of city to seek for my countrymen; but I did not need to seek very long, for they are to be found everywhere. I sought out one Mr. Lindquist who is the leader of the Methodist denomination here and conducts services every Sunday afternoon in the basement of the Episcopal church here. He was apparently somewhat embarrassed when he learned who I was and he said at once, 'We have already started here.'

"The Presbyterian minister Sluter gave me permission to use a schoolhouse for services the next Sunday. Then I had some posters printed announcing the services and I put them up. I had two services on Sunday, with an attendance of about one hundred each time. I was heartily welcomed and very well received by many of them. They listened quietly and attentively to the sermons, and several expressed a desire that I would come again soon. The people are mostly young men and women who are there temporarily, because there is good opportunity for employment. However, some families are permanently settled and the indications are that there will be a large Swedish population. I intend to return there soon to try to establish a church organization."

His second visit was in September. He arrived on September 21 and had services on the 22nd. This time he had the interesting experience



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Duluth in 1878.

of meeting another Augustana home missionary, Rev. P. Erikson of Chicago, who had been sent on a missionary tour of the Michigan copper towns. He had decided to make a voyage up the lake to Duluth, expecting to be the first Augustana pastor at the head of the lakes. He was pleased to learn that Cederstam had already made a beginning, and of course he left the field to him. On his return journey, however, he regretted that he did not stay in Duluth over Sunday, for the boat went aground and Erikson had to spend most of Sunday on a sandbar.

On September 23 Cederstam made his first visit to "Superior City" as it was called then. He found Swedish residents there who had lived in the city fourteen or fifteen years, and they reported that no pastor of their faith had previously been there. He found eighty Swedish people. They had been attending a Presbyterian church, and had been contributing both to the building of the church and to the salary of the pastor. Cederstam was permitted to use this church for his services. Seventy-five persons attended his first service in Superior. His text was John 3:16.

The following Sunday, September 25, Cederstam was again in Du-

luth, and holy communion was celebrated for the first time by the Swedish Lutherans in that city. This service was held in the afternoon in the basement of the Episcopal Church. (This was at the corner of Lake Avenue and Second Street.) Cederstam reported that many came to the service but only a few attended the Lord's table.

On Monday, September 26, a meeting was held in the above mentioned schoolhouse, and preliminary steps were taken towards the establishment of a congregation. Twenty-three communicants signed a declaration stating that they were willing to join. The formal act of organization took place a few weeks later.

Other places in the region were not overlooked. After another visit to Superior on the 27th Cederstam went to Oneata, then a village four miles from Duluth, now included in West Duluth; here he had a service on September 28 with an attendance of about fifty or sixty persons. The following day, the 29th, he made a journey to the village of Thomson, twenty-three miles southwest of Duluth, near the present town of Carlton. In his report Cederstam stated that Thomson had such a reputation for ungodliness and wickedness that he almost feared he would be subjected to blasphemous ridicule. But he was pleasantly surprised to find that the people received him hospitably and listened attentively to his sermon. Returning to Duluth he made a stop at Fond du Lac, where he baptized three children and had a devotional service in the evening, attended by some thirty persons. Having conducted services in Duluth twice on Sunday, October 2, he returned home on the 3rd.

Cederstam's third missionary journey to Duluth, a month later, became the occasion for the formal establishment of a congregation in Duluth and also one in the village of Thomson.

He preached in Duluth on Sunday, October 30, in the forenoon. On the following day he was present at a meeting conducted by a pastor Jacobson of St. Paul, at which a Norwegian Lutheran congregation was organized. During the week he visited Superior, conducted services three times, and discussed with the people there the matter of organizing a congregation. They expressed a desire to wait until some future date.

On November 6, All Saint's Day, Cederstam gave a Reformation sermon in the forenoon. In the evening he preached on Hebrews 10: 19-25, after which he led in the organization of a congregation consisting of fifty-eight communicants as charter members. This is the oldest

Augustana congregation in northern Minnesota, now known as Gloria Dei, Duluth. The first deacons were A. P. Krantz, Nels Hall, and Swen Johnson. The first trustees were E. M. Swanstrom, Ludwig Hagardt, and J. Brandt.

The next day Cederstam set out on the task of getting a church for the new congregation. Calling on several of the "leading Americans" he secured promises of a lot for the church and also help in financing the erection of the church.

The congregation at Thomson was organized Sunday evening, November 13 with twenty-three communicants. It was never received into the Synod and was never listed in the statistical reports.

At the Conference meeting in December Cederstam related some of his personal experiences with the people he had met in and around Duluth, showing the great need of pastoral care and instruction. He urged that if no ordained pastor could be found a lay preacher should be sent as soon as possible to the field. He himself promised to go up there for the Christmas season.

The Conference succeeded in getting a lay preacher, Melchior Egbom, stationed in Duluth in 1871, and he was a faithful and willing worker. Cederstam continued to make occasional visits and to supervise the activities of the congregation.

The ever alert and friendly helper, Dr. W. A. Passavant, accompanied Cederstam on one of his journeys to Duluth in the early summer of 1871. On June 23, Cederstam wrote to Norelius: "You know I went up together with Dr. Passavant. Now we were given two lots, as fine and as well situated as we ever could wish for. I have started a subscription and hope, by the help of God, and with much work, that we can soon get a church. But this I see plainly that if anything is to be accomplished, one must be here all the time."

A month later new difficulties had arisen. Cederstam wrote: "I came here last evening and today I have been out to look around a little. New difficulties present themselves at once. The lots which were given us when Dr. Passavant was here they would not let us have now. M. is doing everything possible to put hindrances in the way. Undoubtedly they feel that the lots are too good for us. . . . Mr. Egbom is here, is teaching school, and is busy and active, and it seems that his efforts are being blessed.

On the 28th he wrote that he had been running around again to see what could be done about the lots. On August 8 he again wrote to

Norelius: "As to the lots and the church, nothing could really be done, except in a preliminary way. If we had obtained the lots that were promised, I think we would have proceeded to build. However, all hope of getting the lots is not yet gone. Yesterday I had a reply from Dr. Passavant and he is very hopeful. I await a reply from Jay Cooke this week. One cause of this trouble is the Methodists. I have now made preparations so that if we do not get the lots that were promised, we will have others. In a few days I am going up there again and I hope to be able to take action at least regarding the lots."

Cederstam continued as the missionary in and around Duluth until July 1, 1872, with Mr. Egbom as his assistant. Then E. N. Jörlander arrived to take charge of the field. He was ordained a couple of months later at the Synod in Galesburg, Illinois. After a stay of a little more than a year in Duluth he taught for a short time at the Conference school, St. Ansgar's Academy, in East Union. Then he went to Sweden and entered the service of the church there. Pastor N. J. Brink served for a year; then the Duluth mission field was vacant for a long time. The first really permanent pastor was C. J. Collin who served from 1882 to 1894.

It is evident that Dr. Passavant was doing his best to help the congregation get a donation of lots from the railroad magnate, Jay Cooke, but it seems that he was not successful, for it is reported that the first church, erected in the early months of 1872, was built on lots donated by L. Mendenhall and a Mr. Roy at Second Avenue West and Second Street. This church property was later sold and a new location chosen, where the present church was built.

From a small beginning, with one little, struggling congregation consisting exclusively of Swedish immigrants, the work in Duluth has developed so that there now are nine churches in the city, and several others in the suburbs, with a total membership of more than 5,000 communicants. Two of the Conference institutions are located in Duluth.

When Cederstam was in Duluth for the Christmas season in 1870 he also visited Superior, and on December 26 preliminary steps were taken towards the organizing of a congregation. Sixteen families and eleven single men and women declared that they were willing to join. The organization was completed on March 20, 1871.

The same year the congregation bought a schoolhouse at auction for \$175.00. In August a church lot was secured and the school house

moved to this lot, which, was at L Avenue and Fourth Street. During the first sixteen years of its existence the congregation was joined with Duluth as a parish, resulting in a rather attenuated schedule of church activity. The Superior congregation, which had forty-seven communicants in 1872, experienced a decline instead of growth in the decades following, and finally, in 1903 merged with the Pilgrim congregation which had been organized in 1888.

The Lutheran settlers in Ashland, Wisconsin, were visited by a Minnesota Conference pastor, Rev. J. J. Frodeen, as early as 1875, but no congregation was established until ten years later.

Just above the Duluth hill, at Midway some Lutheran pioneers from Sweden settled in 1869. The first ones were two brothers, Andrew and Ole Gulbranson. Their father and brothers came three years later. They were visited by N. J. Brink when he served as pastor in Duluth and a congregation was organized in 1874 with thirteen charter members.

Minnesota Valley District, 1870-1875

In 1870 the Minnesota Valley district had six congregations, all in a fairly compact area, extending from East and West Union in Carver county to St. Peter, Scandian Grove, and New Sweden (Bernadotte) in Nicollet county. The one outlying congregation was Vista in Waseca county. The six congregations had an average communicant membership of 202, as compared with an average of 134 for the Conference as a whole.

During the years 1870 to 1875 the home mission field of the Conference extended all the way up the Minnesota River to Big Stone Lake, and to the southwestern corner of the state, where the Minnesota pastors soon met Augustana missionaries coming up from Iowa and Nebraska into the southeastern corner of Dakota Territory.

In the lower valley the only congregation organized in this period was the one at Jordan, organized by Peter Carlson in 1872 and admitted to the Synod in 1873. It never became a strong congregation, but had occasional visits from near-by pastors and maintained its existence until 1910.

Mankato was already a good sized town, but according to the usual pattern, only a few of the Swedish immigrants settled in cities or towns prior to 1875. In the rural areas around Mankato, some home mission work was begun by the Minnesota Conference in 1870 if not earlier. A report of a home mission journey by Peter Carlson in August 1870, published in *Missionären* September 1870, gives the following account of his visit at Judson: "On Sunday, August 7 I was again in Judson and preached in a schoolhouse, which was filled with listeners at ten o'clock in the forenoon. A little congregation had already been organized here, and the services and devotional meetings are led by a former student from Paxton (Augustana College and Theological Seminary was at that time located in Paxton, Illinois). Eleven new members were now received into the congregation, wherefore I took occasion to show what Christ's church is and the conditions pertaining to membership in it. Then I preached and gave communion. The collection for missions amounted to \$4.14. Judson is an old storm center for all

sorts of religious winds. Some, but only a few, are Methodists; some, Baptists, and some nothing, after trying a little of everything."

There is no evidence that the Judson congregation was received into the Synod, but nevertheless we find in the Synodical minutes of 1871 that Judson is listed among the many vacant congregations in Minnesota. A new congregation was organized in 1922.

At Belgrade, four miles from Mankato, a congregation was organized on April 23, 1871, under the leadership of a student, John Ljungberg. The first Swedish settler John Törngren had arrived there in 1855, but left and went south after having built a log house on his claim. He returned when the Civil War began, found his house in ashes. He built a second one. Then he went to the army. Returning in 1865 he found his second home burned to the ground. He built a third one, married and settled down. Other settlers arrived in the 'sixties, and when the congregation was organized in 1871 twelve families and two single men became charter members. The first deacons were John Törngren, Carl Swenson, John Peterson, John Solomon, Adolf Johnson, Anders Kallgren, and Carl Adam Johnson, Trustees were John Kron, John Quick, Sven Peterson, Peter Anderson, Gustaf Kylander, Sven Johan Olson, Carl Dahlberg, Carl J. Eklund, and John Hult. A church was built in 1873. J. G. Lagerstrom became pastor in 1874, coming for a service every third Sunday.

The Clear Lake congregation, west of Lafayette, was organized under the leadership of Rev. C. M. Ryden of New Sweden, on October 30, 1871. Twenty men signed the constitution and became charter members. The first settlers in that vicinity had come in 1868, and others in the early 'seventies. A lay preacher, Svante Anderson, served this congregation and several others in the years 1875 and 1876. The first church was built in 1877. A student, Nils Ohslund, was called to become pastor in 1876 after his ordination, but he declined after having given a promise to accept the call. (See Chapter 37.) This was a discouragement to the congregation. Ohslund had served for a time in Clear Lake as a student with marked success. His rejection of the call resulted in dissension within the congregation. Some members joined a church of another denomination. (Ohslund later served as pastor in Clear Lake, 1886-1893.)

"The First Lutheran congregation of Mankato" was established on December 31, 1874, but it never became affiliated with the Minnesota Conference, although it was visited at times by pastors of the Confer-

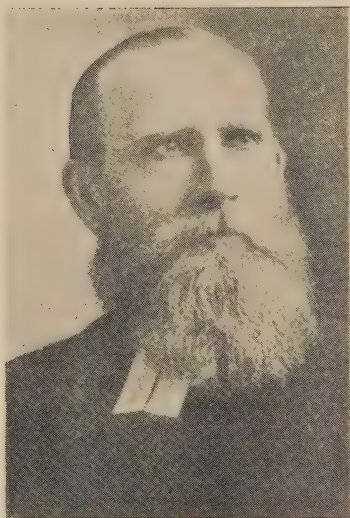
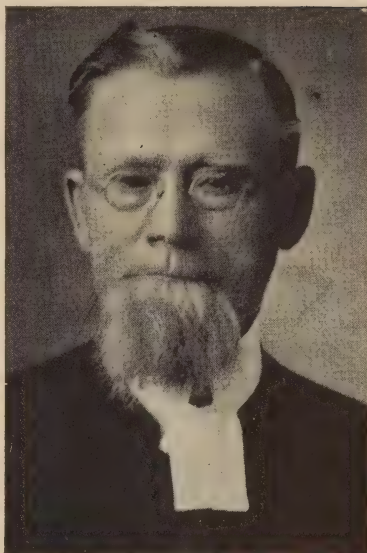


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EAST SVEADAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Rev. Michael Sandell



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

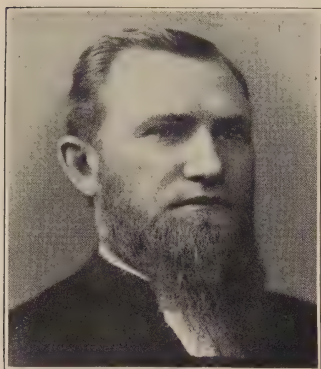
Rev. Jonas Alm

ence, and in 1879 the congregation voted to join with Belgrade in calling Rev. A. Anderson, who at that time was stationed in Vasa as assistant pastor. The congregation was dissolved about 1898, after vicissitudes which indicated that most of the members did not want to remain in the Lutheran faith.

Another congregation, the Immanuel Lutheran, was organized in Mankato in 1886. Those members of "First Lutheran" who wanted to remain Lutheran joined Immanuel, and it has grown to be a large congregation. The name has been changed to Grace Lutheran.

Beginning about 1870 Lutheran settlements were springing up at a number of places on the rich and fertile prairies of southwestern Minnesota, in Watonwan, Murray, and other counties. The indefatigable home missionary, Peter Carlson, soon found his way to some of these settlements. In the area of the present St. James district the first congregation was Sveadahl, organized on August 5, 1870, by Carlson. The pioneer settlers in this community had arrived in 1868 and 1869. A student by the name of Alm had visited there once, and a Bible agent, Olson, twice. Carlson was the first ordained missionary to call on

them. When the congregation was organized sixty-six persons became charter members. Deacons elected at the first meeting were John Beck, Gustaf Sjoquist, and A. P. Westberg. Trustees were Martin Peterson, Sven Nelson, and Johan Swenson. Rev. Michael Sandell, who had become pastor in St. Peter in 1870, was called to make a visit to Sveadahl once a month. During the following years several calls were issued but no resident pastor was secured until H. P. Quist came in 1876. A church was built in 1872.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. H. P. Quist

and served four years. In 1879 an attempt was made to merge the two Sveadahl congregations but this came to naught.

Another congregation was established farther south in the same county the following year. Rev. Sandell of St. Peter, on his visits to the region had found a settlement called Kansas Lake in the southwestern part of the county, and there he organized a congregation at the H. Hendrickson home on December 2, 1871, with thirty-seven charter members. A church was built in 1873, and the congregation joined with the Sveadahl congregations in calling a pastor.

Farther west, in Redwood county, Rev. Peter Carlson organized a congregation at the Hendrik Anderson home on November 1, 1872. The place was called originally Ploom Creek or Plum Creek. A few years later the name was changed to Walnut Grove. No resident pastor was secured until 1885.

In the northern part of Murray county there was a Swedish settle-

On account of disagreement about the location of the church, the members in the western part of the settlement decided to organize a new congregation. This was done on October 8, 1873, with Peter Carlson as chairman of the meeting. The new congregation adopted the name West Sveadahl, whereupon the original Sveadahl congregation thought it best to put the word East in front of their name. These two and two other congregations united as a parish when they called Rev. H. P. Quist in 1875. He came following his ordination in 1876,

ment known at first by the name of Scandia. Rev. L. A. Hocanzon of Vista, on a missionary journey to this region, organized the Sillerud congregation on April 27, 1873. Eleven families and twelve single men became charter members. The congregation was received into the Synod the same year as the "Scandia" congregation, but beginning in 1876 it was listed under the name "Sillerud." There was no resident pastor until 1884. A church was built in 1878.

Another congregation near Sveadahl was known at first as the Little Cottonwood congregation, but the place later received the name Comfrey. The Swedish settlers Gust Wing and Sam Johnson were the first ones in the community. They came by ox team from Taylors Falls in 1869. John Johnson came in 1870, and others followed soon after. The first pastors who made occasional visits to this settlement were Andrew Jackson, J. O. Cavallin, C. M. Ryden, Svante Anderson, and L. A. Hocanzon. The congregation was organized under Hocanzon's leadership on October 30, 1873, with twenty-six charter members. The original church board consisted of C. J. Gabrielson, A. P. Anderson, and Christian Pederson, deacons; and C. L. Thor, Hans Anderson, and L. Grek, trustees. A church was built in 1878. During the first years the congregation was in the Sveadahl-Kansas Lake parish.

A little congregation was organized south of Worthington in 1872 and admitted into the Synod in 1873. It was called Jemtland congregation. It had a very brief existence. A congregation was established in Worthington in 1876 and the few remaining members in the former joined there.

Peter Carlson's home mission journey in August, 1870, previously referred to in this chapter, took him into eight counties, and since it was the first visit by an Augustana pastor in some of those regions we give herewith a translation of his account which was published in the September 1870 issue of *Missionären* (We begin with the day following his visit at Judson):

"On Monday morning, August 18, I set out in a northwesterly direction towards the well known Yellow Medicine Indian reservation, a distance of about ninety miles across the great plains. On this side of the river, namely, the west side, I could find only two Swedes. In the afternoon I passed New Ulm, which many years ago was notorious for its ungodliness and its hatred of Christianity. The Bible agent for Minnesota, Rev. Adams, together with several other pastors, were in danger for their lives here a few years ago. One will also remember

what devastation was wrought on this town in 1862 in the Indian uprising. The city is large and well situated. As I stayed a little while I noticed three churches on a beautiful height in the southwestern part of the city; the largest and most beautiful is the German Lutheran Church, which was erected as a result of the efforts of Father Heyer. The saloons are however the most noticeable establishments in New Ulm. They presented their fronts along both sides of the main street in distressingly large numbers.

"The next day I passed a stone building and a church in Gothic style, erected by the government for the Indians. The church, it seemed, had never been completed. Only the stone walls remained, but they were undamaged. In the afternoon I passed Redwood Falls, and after dark I succeeded in finding two Swedish young men, Nils and Peter Swenson, from Helsingberg, who had settled in a little grove and had lived there five years. One of them was postmaster. The post office is called Swede Grove. Although they kept house themselves, they made

* * *

The Grasshoppers Arrive

"I remember quite distinctly the morning in June, 1873, when the advance troop arrived. I had just started to go to Worthington and while crossing the corn field, I was surprised at seeing what at first appeared to be a snowfall. I looked up and saw millions of hoppers with their outstretched wings sailing down upon the fields. As I stood and looked the air grew thicker. I returned to the house and asked my mother and sister, who were home, to come out and see what I jokingly called the 'snowfall.'

"They were too astonished to speak. We could guess what this would mean. We went out to the cornfield, which only a few minutes before looked so fine, and with promise of a splendid crop. The field was now all bare. The succulent plants were eaten down into the ground. The garden had fared the same way. For a moment we stood dumb. The cloud of hoppers increased in density. They were now lighting down upon the wheat field. We realized that the prospects of the year's crop had been snatched out of our hands in almost an hour. I looked at mother. She wiped away a tear with her apron, while she quoted the words of Job, 'The Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away.'"

Rev. Frank Peterson "Early Days on the Minnesota Prairies" in *Year Book, Swedish Historical Society of America*, 1922-1923, P. 18.

it more comfortable for me than I had expected. I obtained from them all necessary information about the Swedish settlers in the vicinity.

"The following day I drove through a narrow valley along the Minnesota River, continuing for several hours. A road that was scarcely visible in the grass, wound its way between the cliffs on the one side and the river on the other. The valley is very beautiful. Some Norwegians have settled in the valley and are content here. They have formally withdrawn from the Wisconsin Synod and organized a congregation under the name Polk Valley, and desire to have an Augustana Synod pastor. I had to preach to them twice. A collection was received for missions, amounting to \$5.49.

"Then I passed the Yellow Medicine River. Before crossing over to the east side of the Minnesota River I saw the so-called Indian Agency. On a beautiful height between the above mentioned rivers there had been ten brick buildings, some larger, some smaller. They all were burned in the recent Indian uprising and nothing but ruins remains. From here it is about fifty miles to Big Stone Lake, the source of the Minnesota River. I was told that individual Swedish families are settled on both sides of the river all the way up to that lake.

"After ten days of steady travelling and preaching, my health began to fail, and therefore I dared not continue any farther north. I went across the Minnesota River into Renville county, where I met many Swedes. Here I stayed six days, preached six times, held communion service, and performed baptisms. A congregation was organized here under the name of New Prairie. They adopted the constitution and petition for admittance into the Synod.*

"They had good land, large acreages, and although they had no real houses they had enough food in their dugouts. But they were not satisfied with this. They did not believe as the rich man in the parable, that it would do to feed their souls with wheat; they had tasted a better food, and therefore the earthly goods could not satisfy the needs of their souls. They had already started to meet for devotional services among themselves. They were happy therefore to have a prospect of getting their churchly affairs established. A collection was received for missions, amounting to \$5.25.

"After preaching in a dugout on Tuesday morning, August 16, I drove to a place near Fort Ridgely. The next day I came to New Sweden and our old friends there. Then by way of Scandian Grove to

* New Prairie is the congregation now known as Ebenezer, Sacred Heart. The petition was presented to the Synod in 1875, and the congregation was then admitted.

my home (East Union, Carver county). May the Lord bless these humble efforts among our scattered countrymen."

In addition to the congregations mentioned in this chapter, another one was organized in Renville county in the early 'seventies, but the exact date is not known. This was the Swedlanda congregation, in the Town of Palmyra. It is said that the lay preacher, M. Egbom, was the first one to conduct services there, on Midsummer day, 1873, and that the congregation was organized under his leadership in 1874. However, the records of this meeting were lost in a tornado, and the congregation was reorganized December 4, 1878.

Near Montevideo a congregation was organized on November 1, 1873, under the leadership of Rev. Peter Beckman. The name adopted for the congregation was Strombeck.

In more recent years a congregation was organized in the city of Montevideo, and the Strombeck congregation has been merged with it.

The congregations in South Dakota also became part of the Minnesota Valley district, but since they were not directly a fruit of the Minnesota Conference home mission work a separate chapter will be devoted to that field.

South Dakota

Shortly after the Civil War Lutheran settlers began to enter Dakota Territory in the regions bordering on Iowa and southwestern Minnesota. The first Swedish settlements were in the vicinity of Vermillion, at Ahlsborg and Dalesburg in Clay county; Union Creek in Union county, and at Beaver Valley, just a few miles from the Minnesota-Dakota-Iowa corner.

In the fall of 1868 the Synod's Mission Committee stationed Rev. S. G. Larson as home missionary in Omaha and the surrounding regions. In the course of his travels during the following year he visited Ahlsborg twice and some of the other settlements in Dakota at least once. A Norwegian pastor of the Augustana Synod was stationed in Brule, Dakota, in 1869-70. (About the same time a Norwegian Lutheran pastor of the Northern Wisconsin Synod, Rev. N. Olson visited the same regions.) A student by the name of J. F. Wretlöf, stationed in Iowa made occasional journeys into Dakota. The man who organized the first congregations was Rev. S. P. A. Lindahl of Woodhull, Illinois, sent out on missionary tours by the Synodical mission board. Thus it is evident that the beginnings of home mission work in South Dakota were not under the direction of the Minnesota Conference, but the congregations were nevertheless considered as belonging to the Minnesota Conference from the time they were organized.

The first Augustana congregation organized in South Dakota was the Ahlsborg congregation, which had its beginning on January 11, 1870, in the John Albin home. The first settlers in the region had come in 1867. Charter members of the congregation were: C. J. Rundbeck, K. E. Rundbeck, John Albin, Carolina Albin, Chas. Youngberg, C. J. Peterson, Augusta C. Peterson, S. P. Peterson, Sven Preus, Anna C. Nelson, Ole Rasmussen, Carin Rasmussen, N. O. Olson, Louisa Johanson, Hulda C. Olson, Nels Nelson, Anna Olson, J. L. Englund, Johanna M. Englund, Bengt Carlson, Bendila Carlson, A. A. Hagstrom, Magnilla Johnson, John Hammarstrom, John L. Runnell, Catharina C. Runnell, Maria Hammarstrom, C. A. Runnell, S. Svenson, Greta L. Larson, A. J. Johnson, and Nels Nelson.



Rev. S. P. A. Lindahl

The Dalesburg congregation was organized about a year later by Rev. Lindahl. Leaving Sioux City, Iowa, on December 30, 1870, on a journey to Dakota he happened to have as a travelling companion the above mentioned pastor Olson of the Northern Wisconsin Synod. The two of them had a discussion along the way which indicated that Olson did not exactly welcome any Augustana pastor in his region. Olson told Lindahl that the Swedes in Dakota were being taken care of by their Synod, and gave him some fatherly advice that he ought to stay out of there. Olson also reported that a layman by the name of August Ekenberg from St. Louis had organized some congregations and was

returning in the spring to become their pastor.

Lindahl did not agree to stay out of Dakota. Arriving at Vermillion on New Year's Eve he walked eleven miles out to the Swedish settlement. There on the following day he preached a New Year's sermon outdoors because the audience was too large for the house where they were to meet. On January 2 he again conducted services, and baptized five children, besides celebrating holy communion. The same afternoon he went to the Bolin home five miles away, where he found Christian hospitality which made him rejoice. At this place on January 3, 1871, he organized the Dahlsburg (now Dalesburg) Lutheran Church after having held services and communion, and baptized two children. He felt that this congregation had good prospects for the future because there evidently were many among the pioneer members who were of a Christian spirit and were zealous for the church. They were economically poor as yet, he reported, but each farmer had a 160 acre homestead and the soil was fertile. Among the early settlers who helped to organize the congregation were: A. Bolin, J. Sundell, J. Hanson, G. Bjorklund, P. Erikson, R. J. Hoyer, J. G. Ingberg, O. Bjorklund, P. N. Lind, Olof Hanson, Hans Östlund, J. Sjöberg, S. Svenson, Frans Peterson, and Hans Nyman.

On January 4 Lindahl preached at Brule, and there he received information about the affairs and the methods of the lay preacher Ekenberg. He had organized a congregation consisting, according to Lindahl's report, of a few drunkards, and they had called him to be their pastor. Though a layman he gave communion and performed other pastoral acts.

On January 6 it happened that Lindahl and the aforementioned Olson had announced services at the same place at Union Creek. Olson appeared in full clerical garb and officiated in high churchly dignity, delivering a sermon from manuscript. After he was through Lindahl spoke to the same audience. No congregation was established at that time, but on January 10, 1874, the Union Creek congregation was organized with the following as charter members: John Sellberg (it was in his home the services were held in early years), P. G. Wiberg, J. H. Peterson, Otto Leiff, Andrew Shoberg, Gustaf Anderson, N. A. Ceder, Chas. Olson, J. Wallin, A. Wallin, J. M. Peterson, P. Skoglund, H. Anderson, A. Erickson, Lars Erickson, O. F. Westerdahl, Olof Erickson, A. G. Westerdahl, C. J. Arvidson, Olaus Nilson, and A. G. Johnson.

The Big Sioux River, in its course to the Missouri, receives the waters of several small tributaries. Among these are Beaver Creek and Split Rock Creek. About four miles northeast of where these creeks join the Big Sioux, which is about seven miles east of Sioux Falls, the first Swedish settlers in this region made their homes. J. A. Samuelson and N. Graff came to this place in 1869 or 1870 and took homesteads. In 1871 S. A. Joneson, Frans Anderson, and J. Alfred Larson arrived. In the spring of 1873 the colony was increased by the coming of C. J. A. Olander, S. A. Boman, and later the same year Andrew Nelson, John Elofson, and others.

At that time the region was a wild, grassy plain, except that some trees grew along the water courses, providing fuel and in some cases building materials for the pioneer settlers. Fish and game were plentiful, which was a great help to the settlers in the early days when cities and railroads were far away. Some of the first settlers built log cabins and some built sod houses. In their primitive homes they met for worship, before any pastoral leadership was available.

The lay preacher Wretl f who was serving as home missionary in Iowa came to the settlement in the spring of 1873. On June 8 of that year, at a meeting held in the C. J. Olander home, the Beaver Valley



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Pioneer Sod House on the Prairie.

congregation was organized, with about twenty-five charter members. The congregation was not received into the Augustana Synod until 1876. Wretlöf joined the Mission Covenant but did not succeed in swinging the congregation his way.

The first resident pastor in South Dakota was Rev. Carl S. Beckstrom, who was ordained in 1871 on a call to the Dahlsburg parish. He stayed three years, after which there was a long vacancy until S. A. Lindholm accepted a call to that field in 1878. He remained less than a year. C. J. Carlson came in 1880.

In spite of frequent changes of pastor and long vacancies, and in spite of grasshopper invasions and other discouragements, the little congregations made some progress in the 'seventies. The Dahlsburg congregation built a church in 1874, and the Ahlsborg group began to build the same year but were not able to finish until several years later. The Union Creek congregation erected a small house of worship in 1877. These three were the only Augustana Synod church buildings in South Dakota prior to 1880.

The Pacific District, 1870-1875

When the Pacific district was established in 1870 it was described as consisting of the congregations along the first division of the St. Paul and Pacific. It was therefore a long chain of congregations extending from Watertown in Carver County and Buffalo in Wright County to Oscar Lake, Douglas County, a distance of more than a hundred miles. Twelve congregations had been officially received, and one more had been organized, prior to 1870. They were not all directly along the line of the railroad. Most of them were rural churches situated a few miles from the railroad. As the years went on, congregations were organized in the towns and villages, sometimes absorbing the original rural congregation but more often not.

The four pastors stationed in the district, Beckman, Nilson, Lagerstrom, and Lundblad, all were active home missionaries. Beckman may rightly be called the outstanding one among them in this respect, for he organized nine new congregations in his own district, besides making mission tours in other parts of the Conference.

The area included in the Pacific district has been divided into the Cokato and Willmar districts of the Minnesota Conference, and the northwestern portion became a part of the Red River Valley Conference when it was organized in 1912.

Following the lines of the districts as now constituted we consider first the developments that took place in the Cokato district in the period 1870-1875. Three new congregations in this area were officially received into the Conference in 1870: Cokato, North Crow River, and Brush Prairie. These had all been organized in the early part of that year.

The oldest congregation in the immediate vicinity of Cokato is Mooers Prairie (now Salem, Cokato; see Chapter 24). J. G. Lagerstrom was the pastor, after his ordination in 1869.

The same year that he arrived was also the year when the railroad was built through this region. The original survey had placed the prospective railroad within a mile of the Mooers Prairie church. But this



PHOTO COURTESY COKATO ENTERPRISE

Pioneer Street Scene in Cokato.

was changed, and the track was laid farther north. A depot was built at Cokato, about three miles from Mooers Prairie.

When Lagerstrom came he saw the need of establishing church work in the new village. During the summer and fall he travelled on horseback through the community, in and around Cokato. By Christmas time he had discovered or stimulated active interest in his plan to organize another congregation. Subsequent actions indicate that Pastor



PHOTO COURTESY COKATO ENTERPRISE

Cokato in Early Days. In the Foreground is the Cistern which Held Water Supply for Fighting Fires.

Lagerstrom had planned to gather together all Lutherans to the north and south into one congregation and to build the church near the Cokato railroad station. An official call was issued to meet January 7, 1870 at the home of Nils Person.

The organizing of a church in Cokato was not to be done without arousing opposition and engendering strife. The minutes of the first meeting state: "Thereupon arose a most unpleasant controversy, due to the fact that some had come to the meeting for the purpose, as it appeared, of leading the proceedings away from the stated purposes for which the meeting had been called." This controversy was called by some who did not want a Lutheran congregation but a free lance religious association in which each member was to be free to profess whatever belief he desired. Pastor Lagerstrom, however, stood firm in his Lutheran faith. The minutes state: "But after some explanation of the objectives of the meeting had been made, these persons withdrew and peace and unity prevailed."

With good will restored, the meeting unanimously adopted the Lutheran articles of faith and the congregational constitution recommended by the Augustana Synod. Thirty-two men (heads of families) were enrolled as Charter members.

Adopted at this meeting was the resolution which shows that Lagerstrom's plan was to build a church at or near the railroad station and that he desired to have the Mooers Prairie Lutherans join in this project. When the invitation from Cokato was presented to the Mooers Prairie congregation, it was voted down by a vote of fifty-seven to twenty-seven.

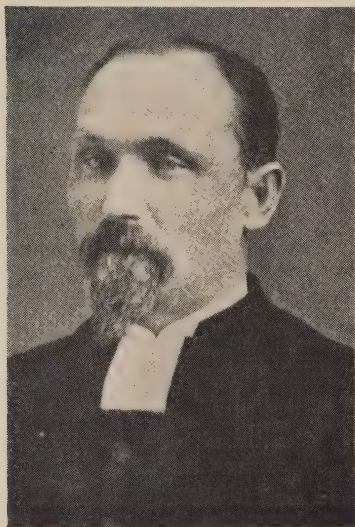
Some of the members of the newly organized Cokato congregation lived at North Crow River, several miles north of the village. Now they wanted the church built there, since Mooers Prairie would not agree to join in Cokato. A meeting was held on February 19, at which it was decided to build the church in the village. A building committee was elected, and plans proceeded for the erection of a church edifice. Services were conducted every third Sunday by Rev. Lagerstrom during the years 1870-1872.

A resident pastor, Rev. Frederick Peterson, came in 1872, and served until 1876. Though a church had been built before he came, it was not yet completed for use in cold weather, and some meetings were held in private homes.

These were difficult times. The year 1873 was a period of great

financial distress all over the nation. Yet the little Cokato congregation made some progress in these years. Christian education for the children was given attention, and in 1873 Miss Christine Stromberg of Buffalo conducted the first Christian day school in the congregation.

In the fall of 1874 Eric Norelius visited Cokato and gives the following account of his impressions (Translated from *Augustana* 1874, Vol. I, No. 21, p. 504): "A change for the better is evident in Cokato. On Thursday, October 8, we attended a mission meeting in the church



Rev. Fredrik Peterson

which has been built in that rapidly growing town. We found the church roomy and quite attractive and clean, though not yet equipped with pews, altar, and pulpit. It was not thus two years ago when the undersigned together with Pastors Lagerstrom and Evald were there to install Pastor Peterson. For the sake of comparison I must relate how it was then. The church was merely a shell and the wind blew in from above, below, and all sides. The window openings were boarded up, with just a few small window panes put in here and there. The weather was stormy and bad and it looked dingy in the church. An awkward looking stove stood on the floor and the stove pipe stuck out through the door. The

building was full of smoke, and the benches and the pulpit were of the most primitive sort. To call forth a festive spirit in such an atmosphere was beyond the power of mortal man. Pastor Peterson and his congregation have been forging ahead. The difference is noticeable. To conquer over the trials of pioneer life with its discouragements, and to bring into being an orderly church life—this requires grace from above. If one is also involved in economic struggles, and especially in religious party strife, as has been the case in Cokato, then it is a miracle of God's fatherly mercy that a Lutheran congregation has been able to arise and maintain its existence and show progress.

"It was in Cokato that the defrocked minister and drunkard, Fogelblad from Sweden carried on for a time with his preaching and drink-

ing. The Baptists have been busy there and have a congregation of thirty families. They are now building a very attractive church. Other preachers of various kinds have tried to work here, and now this fall the Adventist Lee has his tent set up in the middle of the street in front of the door of the Lutheran church and has used all his endeavors to win adherents. I heard that one Baptist had gone over to him; but as yet no one in the Lutheran congregation had let himself be deceived, and it would be well if no one would be led astray by this occult doctrine. . . . We left Cokato and this region with the conviction that our dear Lutheran church has a promising future for its activity."

Norelius was not mistaken. The Cokato Lutheran Church today has a baptized membership of more than 1100, and the district has maintained a very strong and compact Lutheran rural constituency.

About the same time that Cokato was being settled in the late 'sixties, the farming regions north of the village were attracting settlers. J. Beckstrom, Nils Person, and Per Haggberg were said to be the first pioneers along the North Crow River, arriving in 1868, and other Lutherans came the same year and the next. Rev. Peter Beckman visited there in 1868, and preached in the first home, which was built by Beckstrom and Person. J. S. Nilson of Watertown and J. G. Lagerstrom of Mooers Prairie also preached in the community. We have seen how Lagerstrom tried to unite all Lutherans in a congregation in Cokato. When Mooers Prairie did not agree to this, the North Crow River settlers decided they wanted a church in their community, and on March 19, 1870, a congregation was organized by Lagerstrom. Forty-two charter members were enrolled. A former Baptist, Alfred Johnson, became the most active and dependable leader in the new congregation, and according to the testimony of some he was largely instrumental in preparing the way for a religious awakening which affected the congregation in 1875-76. One of the unusual leaders in this awakening was a Swedish immigrant woman, Mrs. Anna Fredrika Knapp. She and her husband had come to America in 1868 and after a few years in Illinois they came to North Crow River in 1873. She was endowed with great ability and was zealous in her efforts to go around among the people, from house to house, inviting, warning, and instructing them. With the hearty approval of the pastor and the church board she spoke at meetings in the church. In remembrance of her and her husband, the community has ever since been called the Knapp community.

The first church was built in 1870, on the land where the present cemetery is. Rev. Lagerstrom served as pastor the first two years, coming for occasional visits. In 1872 the congregation joined with Cokato as a parish and called Rev. Fredrik Peterson, who served until 1877.

McLeod county was settled mostly by Germans and Norwegians, but a small Swedish colony existed a few miles south of Lester Prairie.



COURTESY REV. A. L. CHELL

Old Swedesburg Church, Waverly. Built 1873.

Among the first settlers were two brothers, Jonas and Andrew Burman, who arrived there probably as early as in the 'fifties. The community was known as Brush Prairie, and here a little congregation was organized on March 3, 1870 by Rev. J. S. Nilson. He served as pastor for several years. The Brush Prairie congregation was never large but maintained its existence for about thirty-five years. A little church was built in 1873, which is still standing (1947) although the congregation ceased to exist about forty years ago.

In the northern part of Wright county, at Silver Creek, a little congregation was organized in 1871, but it existed only a few years. In later years (1890) a congregation was again established at this place.

Three miles from the village of Waverly settlers had taken up land,

beginning in 1869. Among the first ones were Carl Olson, John Larson, and J. M. Peterson. The settlement was visited by John S. Nilson, and services were held in the homes, and on February 25, 1873, a congregation was organized under Nilson's leadership in the J. M. Peterson home. The name chosen for the congregation was Swedesburg. There were twenty-seven charter members. Deacons chosen were: Carl Olson, J. M. Peterson, and S. P. Peterson; trustees, Carl Olson, Erik Mattson, and J. P. Larson. Rev. Nilson served as pastor the first years.

We have seen (Chapter 24) how the Mooers Prairie settlement had its beginning in the late 'fifties and the 'sixties, a decade before any railroad extended out into those regions. When services were held there people came from far and wide. In Collinwood township, Meeker county, Lutherans had settled in 1866 and probably earlier. One of the first, if not the very first Lutheran was Olof Erickson Dahlman, who came directly from Sweden to this community and took a homestead. In 1868 his wife, Karen, and the children, Christin, Gertrude, Caroline, Erick, and Olof were sent for. Swen Johnson came in 1867; Taylor Johnson in 1868; Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Johnson and children, Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Peterson and two sons, Mr. and Mrs. Johannes Johnson and three children came in 1871.

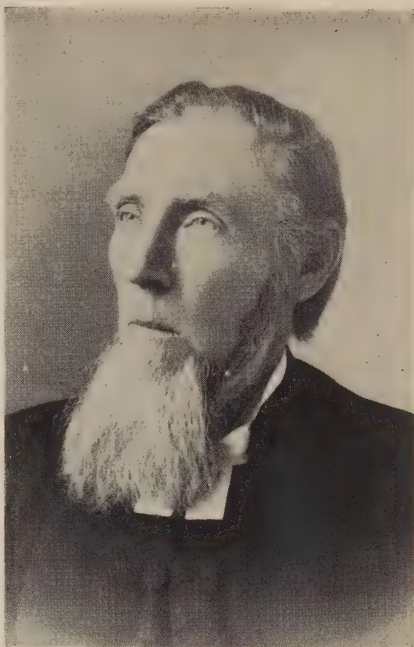
Log cabins were built, and the farmers plowed and planted. They were concerned also about the religious life, and usually walked through the woods summer and winter to attend services at Mooers Prairie, a distance of several miles.

In 1869 the St. Paul and Pacific was built through this region, and the village of Dassel was founded. Among those who settled in and around this village were a number of Swedish Lutherans. There was another village near by, called Steelsville, where some of the Mooers Prairie members lived. These gathered for a business meeting on February 13, 1873, at the home of Sven Harling. Rev. J. G. Lagerstrom was present and served as chairman. The people decided that there was need for a new congregation on account of the distance to Mooers Prairie, and consequently the "Swedish Lutheran Congregation of Steelsville, Meeker county, Minnesota" was organized. Charter members were those settlers whose names are mentioned above. A tract of land was secured and a church built the same year at a place known as "Dahlman's woods."

Rev. Lagerstrom served as pastor for a few months, until he left in 1874. In December of that year Rev. P. A. Cederstam was called to

devote one fourth of his time to the Steelville congregation. He had come to Mooers Prairie shortly before this, and he served the parish for a period of eight years. During part of this time he had the assistance of capable laymen in Mooers Prairie. In 1875 Mr. P. J. Eckman was called to conduct services as often as it was possible for him. Mr. Eckman was at that time a farmer in Mooers Prairie but took an active part in the work of the church, preaching there and in other places occasionally.

The church was moved from Dahlman's woods to



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. P. J. Eckman

Steelville in 1877. A petition signed by eight heads of families and two single men living in and about Dassel was presented, asking that the church be located in Dassel. After a lively discussion the congregation adopted resolutions stating that it was "deemed proper that the church should be located in Dassel in the future," and "that the congregation is willing to erect a church in Dassel as soon as it is possible." A school house was bought in Dassel, the congregation was reincorporated under the name "The Swedish

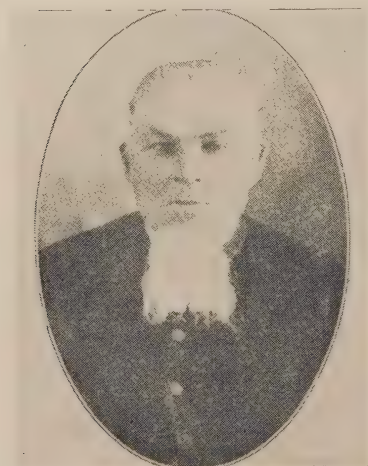


PHOTO COURTESY NORUNGA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Rev. Louis Johnson

Evangelical Lutheran Gethsemane Congregation, Dassel, Meeker county, Minnesota." A church was built in 1886, but the old Steelsville church was retained and services and parochial school were held there until 1908 when the building was sold.

About the same time that the Swedish Lutheran immigrants were settling in the Steelsville region south of Dassel others were taking homesteads or buying land some seven to nine miles north of Dassel. On October 14, 1873, some of the settlers gathered at the home of Louis Nelson for the purpose of organizing a congregation. Rev. F. Peterson of Cokato was chairman and A. E. Boren secretary. The congregation adopted the name "The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Swan Lake Town, Meeker County, Minnesota." Charter members were Anders Olson, Andreas Anderson, Swen Johnson, Anders Larson, A. E. Boren, and Louis Nelson.

Rev. Peterson was called to serve the new congregation at \$2.50 per visit. A ten acre tract of land was given by the railroad company and a church was built in 1874, but was not completed until several years later.

In the counties of Meeker, Kandiyohi, and Swift, the area included in the present Willmar district, six congregations had been established prior to 1870: Nest Lake (New London), Tripolis, Atwater, Mamre-lund (Pennock), Swede Grove (Grove City), and Beckville.

In the late 'sixties a large number of Swedish Lutherans settled in Whitefield township in the southern part of Kandiyohi county. Many of them came from the Vasa community. Peter Beckman was called to the settlement soon after he had come to Tripolis in 1869 to officiate at the funeral of a child who had died. He continued to visit there occasionally to conduct services. On January 11, 1870, the Svea Lutheran congregation was organized under his leadership at the Mons Nelson home. Forty-nine persons were enrolled as charter members. The first church board members were: Deacons, Nels Nelson, Sven Rasmuson, and L. Norlander; trustees, Nels Holmquist, P. Ekberg, and F. O. Anderson. Beckman was called to give them one service per month, and this he did until 1877. Part of the time the lay preacher, Louis Johnson, was his assistant. A church was built in 1872, which was replaced by a new one in 1889.

The Lake Florida congregation was organized November 16, 1870, at a meeting held at the home of J. A. Skoglund. Rev. Beckman undoubtedly was the chairman of the meeting, for he was called to con-

duct services once a month. In 1871 a Rev. Unden was called to preach there, and as he did not belong to the Augustana Synod it was decided not to join the Synod. In 1874, Rev. Unden having resigned, and Rev. Lagerstrom being the pastor, the congregation voted to affiliate with the Augustana Synod, and to join with Nest Lake and Mamrelund in calling Rev. Erik Hedeén. The congregation was received into the Synod in 1875. A parochial school teacher A. Sundberg, who served as Hedeén's assistant in the parish, began to show a preference for the Waldenstrom doctrines, and the result was that the Lake Florida congregation decided to stand by him. They severed their connection with the Augustana Synod and became a Mission church.

Christine Lutheran Church was organized March 8, 1875, through the efforts of Beckman and Louis Johnson who had visited the settlers at Lake Lillian at intervals. Charter members numbered thirteen. Johnson was called to visit the congregation twice a month. The congregation was small in the beginning and until about 1885 had to be content with occasional visits by neighboring pastors. The congregation is now known as the First Lutheran, Lake Lillian.

During these years two congregations were organized in the neighboring county of Swift: Bethesda, Murdock, and Trinity, Benson.

The first white child born in Swift county, Minnesota, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Broberg, born at West Lake in October, 1861. In August, the following year, this little babe, but ten months old, was one of the first victims of the Sioux massacre, the story of which has been told in Chapter 19.

The immediate results of the Indian outbreak, as we have seen, were the sudden flight and dispersion of the surviving settlers in the community. The Brobergs were among the very few who had ventured as far as to Swift county before the Indian outbreak. Following this event several years went by before white settlers again penetrated that region. In 1868 two brothers, John and Charley Larson, came from Altona, Illinois, joined later by a third brother, August. They settled near the present village of Murdock. Others who came shortly after this were August Anderson's, L. J. Johnson's, Nils Larson's, Herstedt, Eckman, Jonas Anderson, Lof A. Olson. All of these came by means of covered wagon and oxen. In 1870 when the railroad reached Benson, immigration gained a new impetus.

Swift county had none of the attractions which had been sought eagerly by earlier immigrants coming to Minnesota—lakes, woods, and



PHOTO COURTESY WILLMAR TRIBUNE

Rev. Erik Hedeén

Mrs. Erik Hedeén, (Clara Mathilda Olson of New London, first wife of Rev. Hedeén, died in 1883 at the age of twenty-six).

rolling hills. Those who ventured out on the bare level plains were attracted thither by the prospect of productive soil ready for the plow. There were no trees for log cabins or for fuel. The first homes were primitive sod huts or dugouts in a sidehill. Some settlers managed to secure hewn logs for a floor, but many a pioneer home had a bare earth floor. Twisted hay had to serve for fuel. The nearest market was St. Cloud or Sauk Centre or New Ulm, and often the pioneer settler walked, carrying a sack of flour home on his back.

The first pastor to visit this region was Pastor Uden, a member of the Ansgarius Synod, a group which had been formed in Illinois as a result of the Waldenstromian controversy. (This was one of the groups which later merged to form the Mission Covenant.) He began to instruct a class of catechumens, and these were later confirmed by Rev. Sjöquist of Pennock, the same man who had been pastor in Minneapolis a few years earlier.

About this time the people in the community had heard that an Augustana pastor was to make a missionary journey into their region and would include Benson as one of the places on his itinerary. This was the veteran home missionary Peter Beckman, one of the pioneers

who helped organize the Conference. He was then in Spring Garden, Goodhue county. Since 1869 he had been pastor in Tripolis, Kandiyohi county, and an indefatigable worker in the new settlements in western Minnesota. His report to the Conference in December, 1871 (the manuscript copy of his report is in the Conference archives) reveals something of the hardships and the heartaches of the pioneer pastor:

"I wish to give a brief report about my work since our last Conference meeting. The Lord has through His great grace and mercy granted me the precious gift of health, so that I have been able to continue my work on my extensive field of labor without interruption. I have visited the congregations already organized in Meeker and Kandiyohi counties, according to planned itineraries. In these congregations there have been no special happenings; the people attend services faithfully when the weather on the great plains permits. The Swede Grove congregation has decided to move the location of its church to the station. There they have bought a piece of land for the church and the cemetery, and now the congregation has increased in numbers considerably. I and Louis Johnson will visit them every third Sunday for the time being. Since the last Conference meeting (October, 1871) I have made a journey to Renville and Chippewa counties. I then visited our countrymen at Beaver Falls.* Preached to about twenty persons, had a communion service, baptized two children. Found some spiritually minded people. Then I drove to the New Prairie** congregation, instructed the confirmation class on Saturday forenoon. In the afternoon we had a congregational meeting and decided on a church lot. On Sunday I preached, had communion, baptized one child. Here the people are much concerned about getting a pastor, and if this cannot be, then they desire that the Conference would send them a suitable lay preacher. I promised to present this matter to the board.

"The next day I travelled to the west side of Hawk Creek. Preached there to about twenty persons, had communion service. Baptized one child and married one couple. Here most of the people are Baptists. However there are both Swedes and Norwegians who are devoted to our Confession and desire to have us visit them.

"The following day I journeyed on into Chippewa county. Here many people were gathered and it seemed that there were many who gave heed to the Word. Here also I had communion, and baptized five

* County seat of Renville county 1866-1900.

** Sacred Heart.



PHOTO COURTESY WILLMAR TRIBUNE

*Old Nest Lake Church, Built 1866, two Miles West of New London.
In this Church the Minnesota Conference had its Tenth Anniversary
Convention in 1868.*

children. A Norwegian congregation has been established here, which for the present is being visited by pastors of the Norwegian Conference, but most of the Norwegians have been members of the Augustana Synod and still would be considered as such. They were very disappointed at the step taken by their brethren. And they insisted that if a Swedish Augustana congregation would be organized, which could be visited by the ministers of the Augustana Synod, they would want to belong to that congregation. The next day I went home.

"On Monday, November 20 (1871) I set out on a journey to Herrom (Herman?) station seventy-nine miles west of Kandiyohi station. Here I stayed with a friend, Jungberg, four miles from the station. Here I intended to have a service in the evening, but it was at that time packed full of railroad workers of other nationalities, so we could not have a service; however we had brief devotions. Some Swedes have taken land around here, and very likely others will do the same, for there is much land to be had here.

"The next day I went back to Benson and stayed with a Swede, sent out a notice that we would have a service the next day. But when

the day came we were overwhelmed by a blizzard so we could hardly crawl out of the dugout where we were. Not one person was able to attend services. The following day the storm had calmed down but it was so cold that when the iron horse had pounded his way through the snowdrifts (he had to stay in one drift a day and a night) I went back to another station called Kerkhoven where services had previously been announced. Here I held services for the people who lived at the section house, for no one else was able to come on account of the cold. The next day I returned home again, seemingly having accomplished nothing. I had to promise the people in all these places, however, that I would come again, for not a few countrymen live here and there along this railroad."

Beckman continued to visit these regions, and in the winter of 1874 the settlers at Murdock decided to ask him to come there. Jonas Anderson and John Larson hitched up a yoke of oxen and drove over to Benson on the day Beckman was to be there. They invited him to come to their home and conduct services, which he did. A congregation was organized on March 24, 1874. The name chosen was Bethesda Swedish Lutheran Church in Town of Kerkhoven, Swift County, Minnesota. Four families and seven individual persons became charter members, sixteen adults and ten children altogether.

Beckman and his assistant, Louis Johnson, came at intervals to visit the congregation on their missionary journeys. The people underwent the usual pioneer hardships, the grasshopper invasion in July, 1876, and the severe winters. There were spiritual struggles too which brought division of the little congregation, as a result of the Waldenstrom doctrine.

The Trinity Lutheran congregation of Benson was organized under Beckman's leadership on June 3, 1874, with twenty-one charter members. He and Louis Johnson visited the congregation on their missionary tours. It seems that no church was built until 1889. Services were held in the homes and in a schoolhouse.

One more congregation, organized in the Willmar district before 1875, remains to be mentioned. This is the First Lutheran of Litchfield. The original congregation in that area was the one called Beckville, (see Chapter 26) organized before the village of Litchfield had come into existence. The village was established in 1869 when the railroad was built. A number of Swedish Lutherans settled there immediately after this. On August 28, 1873, a meeting was held for the pur-

pose of organizing a congregation. Sixteen charter members were enrolled. The first deacons were Carl J. Zettergren, A. Hintzer, and Nels Ogren; trustees were B. P. Nelson, A. H. Lofstrom, and J. P. Skarp. No church was built until 1884. During the early years the services were held in rented quarters. J. G. Lagerstrom served as pastor 1873 and 1874, after which the congregation joined with Beckville in calling Peter Dillner as pastor.

The congregations in Douglas county and the surrounding area were also attached to the Pacific district, but since this constitutes a specific field, and now is no longer a part of the Minnesota Conference, a separate chapter is devoted to the mission work in that area.

Oscar Lake

Famous in song and story, the Red River Valley is a unique feature of the Minnesota-Dakota country. One of the few rivers in the United States that flows north, the Red River drains a large portion of Minnesota into arctic seas. Parts of the valley, some thousands of years ago, formed the bed of an immense glacial lake, according to evidence dug up by scientists. When ancient Lake Agassiz dried up, millions of acres were left flat as a floor, treeless, fertile, an open invitation to the farmers of later days.

In this valley, it is claimed, has been found the most ancient human skeleton yet unearthed in America. If the Kensington Runestone is proved genuine, we shall have evidence that a Viking expedition came to the Red River Valley in 1362, 130 years before Columbus sailed across the Atlantic. The first permanent white settlement in Minnesota was the Selkirk colony, established 1812 in the northwestern corner of the state.

It is not our purpose to relate the story of these episodes in Minnesota history, interesting though they are. We shall tell something about a settlement which had its beginning fifty-one years after the Selkirk colony, and 501 years after the purported visit by the Norsemen in the middle ages.

In the years of the Civil War the price of wheat was high in Minnesota, and it is not surprising that farmers in the old settlements went out to look for new land. Although the Sioux outbreak in 1862 put a temporary scare into the pioneer settlers, and halted the westward movement for a time, the migration to new soil was soon under way again.

In 1863 Mr. Olaf Fahlin of Vasa returned from service in the army, went to Douglas county, filed on a homestead on the south shore of Oscar Lake, a few miles southwest of the present village of Holmes City, and the following year brought his family, thus beginning the first Swedish Lutheran colony in that county and in that section of the state. Other Swedish settlers came immediately after, many of these coming directly from northern Sweden. They found the land in Doug-

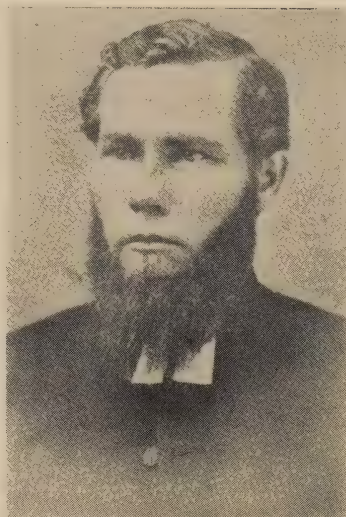


PHOTO FROM VASA ILLUSTRATA, COURTESY VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Olof Fahlin, Pioneer Settler at Oscar Lake.

*Jonas Magny, First Student at Conference School in Red Wing.
Pioneer Home Missionary, Ordained 1870.*

las county to be similar to the region which they had left, and this helped to make them feel at home in their new surroundings.

They desired to have the Lutheran church in their new settlement but no pastor was available. They met for religious services without pastoral leadership, but within a few years the Lutheran Minnesota Conference had 'heard' about these settlers and was making plans to give them spiritual care. At a Conference meeting held at Watertown, Minnesota, January 25 to 28, 1866, the attention of the Conference was directed to "the dispersed countrymen who are scattered almost all over the whole state of Minnesota," and the members of the Conference longed to do something for the spiritual welfare of these people. A committee was elected to secure a traveling missionary. The committee succeeded in engaging student Jonas Magny, who at that time was a licensed lay preacher, to make a journey up to the northwestern regions. His report was presented to the Conference at its meeting in Vista September 20 to 23, 1866, but unfortunately was not incorporated into the minutes of the meeting. The Conference voted to keep the

manuscript in the archives as an historic document, but it has evidently been lost. This is regrettable, for it would no doubt be interesting as the record of the first home missionary journey by a Swedish Lutheran preacher to that part of Minnesota.

It is known, however, that on this journey Magny organized the Oscar Lake congregation. The minutes of the meeting, which was held on August 8, 1866, are still extant. The meeting was held in the Olof Fahlin home. A. G. Sohlberg served as secretary and he used an old emigrant trunk for a writing desk. The seats for the audience were the joists of the incomplete floor. The church records of the Oscar Lake congregation show that the following persons joined the congregation in 1866: Mr. and Mrs. Olof Fahlin, Ola Paulson, John Olson Fahlin, Mr. and Mrs. Jon Mattson, Mr. and Mrs. Kristoffer Person, Carl Alfred Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. Isak Peterson, and C. Gustaf Johnson. Many others joined in 1867.

The first deacons were elected in 1867, as far as the records show. These were Christopher Person, L. J. Dalen, and J. N. Nedstrom; the trustees were Olof Paulson, Olof Fahlin, and Peter Peterson.

The congregation was received into the Augustana Synod in 1867, and the statistical report for that year indicates that there were fifty-seven communicant members. In the fall of 1866 the Conference requested Rev. J. S. Nilson of Watertown to visit Oscar Lake once during the fall, but there is no report as to how or when this assignment was fulfilled. The following year the Conference asked its home mission committee to see that Oscar Lake would receive pastoral attention, but the committee had no traveling missionary to send. The Conference appealed to the Synod to arrange for a traveling missionary, and the Synod authorized that this be done, but it seems that the only result was a brief journey by Rev. Theodore Dahl, who at that time was stationed in Meeker county.

The congregation wanted a church. A log building was erected, twenty-four by thirty feet in size and twelve feet high. It stood on a high hill on the Olof Fahlin homestead, one mile north and one mile west of the present Oscar Lake church. According to a description given by the present pastor of the Oscar Lake church, Rev. E. O. Valberg, the cemetery was located about 125 paces south of the main east-west road, and the church was located almost directly north of the cemetery entrance, seventy paces north of the east-west road. At present a very large box elder tree marks the spot where the first church stood.

The Olof Fahlin house in which the Oscar Lake congregation was organized in 1866. The kitchen was added later.



PHOTO COURTESY
REV. E. O. VALBERG

The erection of this building was begun in 1867. The work was done almost entirely by volunteer labor. In this church the Minnesota Conference held its convention June 5 to 8, 1872.

Various attempts were made by the Conference to get pastors to serve the Oscar Lake church and the surrounding regions which were being settled by Lutherans. The Synod in 1868 assigned a lay preacher, F. Westerdahl to serve at Holmes City. At the Conference meeting in September, 1869 Douglas and adjoining counties were mentioned as a home mission field in special need of care. Pastor J. P. Lundblad, stationed in New London, was urged to visit that field as often as possible.

In June 1870 Jonas Magny was ordained on a call to become assistant pastor in Vasa. During the summer he was sent on an extensive home mission journey. His report on this journey, presented to the Conference at its next meeting, was published in full in *Missionären* in April 1871. This document gives us a view not only of the experiences of one individual home missionary, but graphically portrays the pioneer home mission era in western Minnesota. Since the visit of Rev. Magny was the first visit by a Lutheran pastor in many of the places mentioned we give herewith a translation of his report in full:

"Since I made an extended mission journey in the area of the Conference last summer, I wish to give a brief account thereof:

"The region which I visited was Stearns, Todd, Douglas, Pope, and Ottertail counties. Since it was out of the question to secure anyone to drive for me so far out West, and since there are no railroads or other means of transportation available, I got a horse and buggy and thus

equipped I set out on the 1st of August to Chisago Lake, where I attended to business matters.*

"After a week there I left on a Thursday morning and after a trip of three days, covering a distance of about 160 miles, I was at a place some ten or fifteen miles north of Sauk Centre, at a sawmill which now is also a flour mill, called Moores Mill, in the neighborhood of a Swedish settlement.**

"Sunday morning was somewhat rainy, and since I could not go any further with my horse on account of the lack of roads, I left the horse at the sawmill and went on foot to look for the Swedes who had settled a few miles from there. However, before I reached the settlement I met a Norwegian who was on his way to a Norwegian settlement situated a few miles north of the sawmill. He persuaded me to go with him and to preach in his stead in the forenoon; in the meantime a message was sent to the Swedish settlement so I could meet with them in the afternoon, and then I had the pleasure of seeing about twenty persons gathered.

"On Monday forenoon we had another meeting, and celebrated holy communion. I visited this settlement three times and had five meetings there. (The above mentioned Norwegian settlement was visited twice.) Here are about fourteen families, most of them from Skåne. When I visited them on the way home a little congregation was organized there, called "Askeryd."

"In the afternoon I drove twenty miles northeast from Moores Mill to a place called Swan Lake in Todd county. Arriving late in the evening I could not look for any Swedes that day, but stayed with an American; the following morning I met a Swedish young man and learned from him that nine claims around there had been taken by Swedes, but that all the settlers except three, were away working. Therefore I could not do anything, so I returned immediately to Sauk Centre, a distance of thirty or forty miles. Arriving at dusk at the home of a Norwegian by the name of Jo Jensen, a message was sent at once to some Norwegians who live in that vicinity, that at their own request they had the opportunity that same evening to come together around the Word of God and the sacramental table.

"The following morning I was ready at an early hour to resume my journey, to reach Oscar Lake that day, if possible. Late in the

* Chisago Lake was Magny's old home.

** This must have been in the vicinity of the present village of Little Sauk.

evening I had the pleasure to meet old friends in this rather much discussed Oscar Lake settlement. I would have needed to rest the remaining three days of the week, but used them nevertheless to visit the countrymen living around there, and on Friday forenoon I had service in a Swedish settlement known by the name Prairie settlement or Norunga congregation. In the afternoon of the same day services at a place fourteen miles from there at Red Rock Lake. Prairie settlement is only eight miles south of Oscar Lake and will presumably join with that congregation in calling a pastor. Here they insisted that a congregation had been organized, but when I saw the minutes I found that the whole affair was merely a meeting of the settlers at which they had agreed to organize a congregation by the name of Norunga; no constitution had been adopted and no one had signed any membership list. Therefore, in consultation with them I set a date for a meeting at which a congregation was organized and a constitution adopted. They also decided to get materials for a church this winter, and according to resolution then adopted it will be thirty feet wide and thirty-two feet long. How large the congregation is at present I do not remember; but they had hopes that there soon would be 100 communicants.* I visited this settlement six times and found not only the ordinary churchly spirit, but also in not a few instances a true Christian spirit.

"On Sunday, August 14, I preached the Word of God twice to the people at Oscar Lake, when they were gathered in their church which consists of log walls under a shingle roof, with a floor of rough boards, and only a few of the windows put in. The next day I drove through Alexandria to Crooked Lake, a settlement lying six to twelve miles southeast of Alexandria.** Here I preached to a large number of Swedes on Tuesday and Wednesday, gave communion, and baptized seven children, of whom three were from the same family. A great hunger for the Word of God was evident among these people. In the first house that I visited I was met by a woman who, according to the testimony of others and according to what I myself learned later, was a spiritually minded woman from Dalarne. She met me with tears in her eyes and with the words, "God still hears prayer." I preached four

* The congregation was received into the Synod in 1871 and was reported as having fifty-two communicants. Its hope of getting 100 communicants was not realized until 1922, fifty-one years later.

** Nelson-Osakis region.

times in this settlement, which consists of forty families and enjoyed a pleasant stay with these serious-minded people.

"On Wednesday evening I had a service for quite a few Scandinavians in Alexandria. There are no Swedes residing in this place permanently, but those who are there need all the Word of God that they can get. Early on Thursday morning I drove to the Lake Ida settlement, situated six to twelve miles north of Alexandria, where I had services in the afternoon of the same day, and also on Friday forenoon, at which time we had the Lord's Supper, and several children were baptized. About four o'clock in the afternoon I set out on a journey of some twenty miles to a settlement known by the name of Parkers Prairie, situated in the southeastern part of Ottertail county. Here I found old friends from Chisago Lake. Had holy communion with full service on Sunday forenoon; in the afternoon baptism of children and an hour of Bible study. Here about twenty claims have been taken by Swedes and there is room for many more, who will be welcome on condition that they are churchly. No pastor had visited them before this.

"On Monday morning I was ready to set out towards the west through Ottertail county, to visit these regions which are so unknown to us, but a heavy and continuous rain prevented me, and I had to be content to stay still that day. On Tuesday morning I was going to get started at last, but the roads were exceptionally wet, and my horse had been injured on one of his front legs, so that it was with difficulty I covered twenty miles that day, and just as evening was coming on I came to the home of a Swede living three miles from a place called Chippewa.* I could not get lodging there, however, but was told to go to the next house, where a light still was shining in the window, and where an American, a single man, was living. I was well received there and allowed to share in whatever there was in the house. I was permitted to let my horse go in the pasture, and I had to stay while I got some medicine for his injured foot before I could dare to continue on my journey on roads which were still more muddy after the previous night's rain. During the time I was delayed here, about a day and a half, I used the opportunity to find some six or seven families living a couple of miles away. I preached one sermon there and baptized two children.

"About noon on Thursday I started out with my horse at a slow

* This must have been in the vicinity of Christina Lake.

walk towards Evansville, ten miles away. Here I stayed with a Swede by the name of Dahlheim from Stockholm, who showed me every kindness. He said that it would be impossible to gather the countrymen around there just on a moment's notice, but that it would be best to put up some notices along the public road, announcing services on some future day. I followed this advice, and after I had gotten the housewife to wash some of the most necessary clothes for me and I had written some posters, which the man promised to put up, I set out on my journey to Oscar Lake, where I had announced services for Saturday, and also a business meeting of the congregation and a meeting with some children who wanted to be enrolled for confirmation. However, on Friday evening I had service and holy communion for some families living between Evansville and Oscar Lake. Evansville lies at the northern border of Douglas county. About thirty Swedish families live there.

"On Saturday I was up at dawn to continue the journey to Oscar Lake, in order to get there by one o'clock, the hour set for the above-mentioned meeting, but I lost my way and did not arrive until four o'clock. Fortunately the settlers had followed an old habit of coming late so I found the people gathered. The next day, Sunday, August 28, I had holy communion with full service at Oscar Lake in the forenoon; in the afternoon I had communion service in Norunga; on Monday I had service and congregational meeting.

"Now it was time for me to think of returning homewards, to attend the Conference meeting in St. Paul and church dedication in Vasa, but circumstances led me to make different plans. For one thing my horse was unable to walk as much as would be necessary to bring me to the Conference in time, and for another thing my journey had revealed such a great need for more work among the countrymen out here. I was concerned especially about what to do with the many young people who wanted to be confirmed, some of whom were past the usual confirmation age. I decided to stay therefore and do all I could for them.

"The first problem was how to get them together in a hurry, and how to arrange for them to get their sustenance at some place during the time needed for their instruction. Most of the children lived at Oscar Lake and that was the only place where I could have them. I presented the matter to the people, appealing to them to open their homes to the children who had to come from a distance. Six re-



Threshing scene in Douglas county, Minnesota, in the 'seventies. At such occasions Rev. Jonas Magny came to "shake the harvest tree" for donations of grain or money for the church.

PHOTO COURTESY
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

sponded immediately that they each would take care of one child during that time. Now I sent notice to those who had asked for confirmation, and I myself travelled fifty miles to get them all together, and in this way I succeeded in getting twenty children from six settlements. Fourteen were from Oscar Lake, one from Norunga, one from Parkers Prairie, Ottertail county, one from Sauk Centre, two from Crooked Lake, and two from Lake Ida. With these I met fourteen days within a period of six weeks, and had the pleasure of finding them quite willing to study.

"During this time I visited the different settlements; was up in Ottertail county twice, once over to the eastern part and once to the western part, also visiting Evansville, where I had a communion service. In the western part of Ottertail county there was not much that could be done, except that I got some information as to where there are prospects for settlements and for churchly homes. Most of the Swedish settlers were single men who now were out working. I found two places, however, Eagle Lake* and Fergus Falls, which soon will require attention; at one of these places it was said that about thirty claims had been taken by Swedes. Ottertail is settled almost exclusively by Norwegians, and the Swedes there are quite intermingled. But I heard of Swedes 150 miles farther on from where I was, and if I had had time I surely would have gone to visit them.**

* Battle Lake.

** Possibly this was in the Warren region, or some place in Dakota Territory.

"Besides these journeys I worked to get the church in Oscar Lake ready so that they could use it in cold weather. At the above mentioned congregational meeting it was decided that the debt on the church building should be paid this fall, and to get the money needed for this each communicant was taxed fifty cents. For the finishing of the church interior and for the purchase of a stove a free will subscription was begun. Everything that is to be bought is rather expensive out here and cash is hard to get. This makes the prospect somewhat gloomy at present; but I found a way; I drove to Alexandria, twenty miles from the settlement, and secured a promise that wheat would be accepted for anything that the church would need. Now the people were in the midst of threshing, and I grasped the opportunity to be along and shake the harvest tree. A subscription was begun and both enemies and friends were visited. Seventy bushels of wheat and thirty dollars in money were collected, the work was completed, all to everyone's satisfaction. As far as I could understand the church was ready, when I left, to the extent that they could use it on cold days, and something had also been done to improve its appearance. If the people continue as they have begun, they will assuredly have the church completely ready this winter. Naturally I spent more time at this place than any other.

"On October 16 I had confirmation, and it was surprising to see the number of people who came. During the following week I made a tour of all the settlements, except Evansville which I had previously visited three times. I conducted communion services and attended to whatever other pastoral duties were necessary. Not until the 24th of October, the day after the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity, did I set out on the journey home. I did not take the same route as when I went out, but went by way of Monongalia, Kandiyohi, Meeker, Wright, and Carver counties, and had the pleasure of meeting brethren and friends.

"After having travelled about 1,300 miles in three months with my horse, preached fifty or sixty times, baptized forty-eight children and confirmed twenty, I was glad to reach my beloved home on November 5.

"May the Lord bless the sowing of His Word unto the salvation of many souls."

It is hardly necessary to make the comment that this home mission effort by Magny was of fundamental importance to that section of



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. Aron Wahlin

PHOTO COURTESY REV. E. O. VALBERG

*Monument Erected on the old
Oscar Lake Cemetery.*

the state. The only congregation legally organized before that time was the one at Oscar Lake. During his visit Norunga completed the process of organization, and this congregation was received into the Synod in 1871. At the same Synod Fahlun (Nelson) and Lake Ida (Garfield) were also admitted. In 1872 three more congregations in Douglas county were received into the Synod namely Fryksände, (in Urness township, south of Evansville), Wenersborg (Kensington), and Christina (Christine Lake); also Eagle Lake (Battle Lake) in Otter-tail county. Parkers Prairie (First Lutheran) had also been organized and applied for admission but was not received into the Synod until two years later because of constitutional changes which the Synod would not agree to. In Becker county, along the newly built Northern Pacific, two congregations had been organized and were received in 1872, namely Upsala and Eksjö, near Detroit Lakes. In 1874 another congregation, called Swedelund, in Becker county had been organized. In 1875 the Lekvatten (Trinity, Holmes City) and Christvalla (near Oscar Lake) were received into the Synod. Central Swede Grove, Pelican Rapids, was organized in 1874, but was not received into the

Synod until 1877. The total membership of the twelve Red River Valley congregations listed in the statistics for 1875 was 650 communicants and 546 children. The Svea congregation at Alexandria, which now is the largest Augustana congregation in the Red River Valley, was organized in 1877. Others followed in rapid succession within a few years as immigrants flooded into that region.

No resident pastor was secured for the Red River Valley until 1873. Until that time the churches were under the care of traveling home missionaries, principally Jonas Magny. In 1872 it was reported that he had spent seven months of the year as traveling missionary, and beginning with June of that year student T. Feltstrom had been assigned as Magny's assistant in northwestern Minnesota. Magny was at this time serving as pastor of the Cannon Falls parish.

The shortage of pastors was a serious handicap in the attempt to organize congregations and gather the settlers around the Word of God. In 1873 it was reported that along the St. Paul and Pacific and the Sauk Valley railroad there were at least 5,000 Swedish settlers. Less than ten per cent of these had been brought into the fold of the Minnesota Conference. It was stated that there was in many places a hunger for the Word of God, and since the Conference had been unable to meet the needs adequately the Baptists were doing what they could to gather the people.

At the Synod in 1873 Aron Wahlin was ordained on a call to Oscar Lake, Norunga, and Wenersborg. He stayed only three years, after which there was a vacancy of three years, until the coming of Louis Johnson after his ordination in 1879. Since then the church work in that area has advanced more rapidly. It remained a part of the Minnesota Conference until 1912 when the Red River Valley Conference was organized.

The Minnesota Conference extended its activity into North Dakota in the late 'seventies. The first Augustana congregation organized in that state was Maple Cheyenne, about thirteen miles northwest of Fargo, which was organized in 1878 by Rev. A. P. Montan of St. Paul who made a mission journey to that region at the request of the Minnesota Conference. North Dakota remained a great home mission field of the Minnesota Conference until 1941, when that state was included in the area of the Red River Valley Conference.

The Big Stone Region

(*Account of a Missionary Journey to Big Stone Lake in Minnesota by the President of the Synod, E. Norelius, and Pastor P. Carlson.* Translated from a Report by Eric Norelius in *Missionären* Vol. I, No. 9, Pages 224-228, and 242-245, September and October, 1876.)

When the question arose at the last meeting of the Minnesota Conference as to whether, during the summer, some pastor ought to visit the vacant congregations and also the new settlements where as yet no congregations have been organized, along the upper reaches of the Minnesota River, and it seemed that no one was able to undertake this duty, the undersigned offered to do it. When Pastor P. Carlson heard this it stirred his old wanderlust and he said at once: "If Norelius goes I'll go too."

It was decided therefore that we should go on this tour in the month of August. After having been home three Sundays following the synodical meeting, I came to East Union on August 1 and found Brother Carlson well equipped for the journey. He had prepared a real missionary wagon in which we were not only to ride but where we also could study, and sleep at night. It had a roof made of oil cloth and walls of colored trousering, all inexpensive but suited to its purpose. In the front end was a box for food and various articles.

Brother Carlson took with him his youngest son, Anders, to take care of the horses. He had prepared sleeping quarters for him in a hammock which was hung by means of hooks from the roof of the wagon. Our baggage consisted of some bed clothes, our suitcases, our food supply which was a few loaves of rye bread and some smoked meat. A sack of oats and a jar of water constituted the rest of our equipment.

Thus prepared we set out on Friday, August 4 in warm and sultry weather. Our friends in East Union bade us a hearty farewell and wished us God's blessing in our work.

We went by way of Henderson and St. Peter. A little way above Henderson we were caught in a rather severe rain and thunder shower and we had the first opportunity to test the usefulness of our wagon.

It stood the test and we arrived, safe and sound, and dry, in the evening at Rev. Lagerstrom's in St. Peter. A service had been announced for the evening, and we both took part, as we had agreed to share equally in the preaching on this journey, but as a result of the rainy weather very few were present. Now I begin with my notes:

August 5—Today it is like a calm after a storm at sea. After stormy weather God lets the sun shine, and we have reason to thank God who permits such changes to take place both in the realm of nature and the spirit. In the forenoon we looked through the excellent new building of the Gustaf Adolf school.* The interior is gradually approaching completion. All the work has been well done and one can feel well satisfied with it. I know of nothing to criticize. May now the Lord cause our congregations in Minnesota to contribute freely of their temporal goods to meet the necessary expenses for the establishment and maintenance of this school. May He be permitted to make it a nursery for Christian education, to the welfare of church and state!

In the afternoon we said farewell to our friends in St. Peter and set out for Scandian Grove. When we had gone a few miles we met God's chastisement—the grasshoppers, which in untold multitudes filled the air and covered the ground. It gives one a feeling of awe to meet these destroyers of the most important foods for man and beast. How helpless man is in the face of these little creatures when they come in such numbers as we here saw!

Soon we were at Pastor Pehrson's place. Pastor Ryden was there to meet us and I went with him to preach in New Sweden** and Brother Carlson stayed in Scandian Grove to preach on Sunday forenoon.

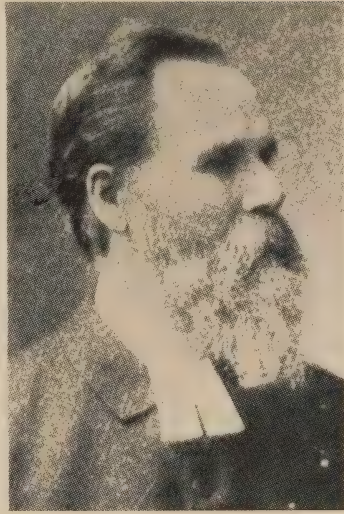


PHOTO FROM VASA ILLUSTRATA,
COURTESY VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Norelius in 1876

* Old Main at Gustavus Adolphus College. See Chapter 41.

** Bernadotte.

August 6—A glorious Lord's Day. The weather was beautiful but the air was full of grasshoppers. In New Sweden the church was well filled with listeners, and we had opportunity to consider the words of our Saviour in Matthew 7 where He says that it does not help merely to hear God's Word, but we must both hear and do if we are to have any spiritual benefit of it. Hearing and doing go together. If one separates them one from the other, one deceives oneself. There are two main lines in false Christianity, which seem to be very different and often fight against one another, and yet are fundamentally very much alike. The one is formalism which makes Christianity consist in hearing, that is, to use the means of grace in an outward way. When one has heard, then God has been worshipped. That is a good deed. But to do, that is, to obey God's Word, that is never thought about. The other way is—what shall I call it?—it has many names—rationalism, synergism, Phariseeism, etc., etc., which considers Christianity to be various pious deeds and works, but does not bother to hear what the Word of God teaches about faith and works. To be pious and to fear



Some Journeys of Eric Norelius.

————— To organization meeting of Conference, 1858.

..... Home mission journey, December, 1860.

— — — — Home mission journey, January, 1861.

— — — — Home mission journey, August, 1876.

1. Red Wing; 2. Chisago Lake; 3. St. Paul; 4. East Union; 5. Watertown; 6. St. Peter;
7. Fort Ridgely; 8. Town of Palmyra, Renville county; 9. New Prairie (Sacred Heart);
10. Big Stone Lake; 11. Willmar.

God according to one's own reason and feelings is the main thing, no matter what God's Word teaches. The dear God is not permitted to do anything and His Word is of no value.

The congregations in Scandian Grove and New Sweden, like many other congregations in Minnesota, have suffered severely as a result of the grasshopper devastation. Yet the Lord has upheld them and permitted them to have that which is best of all: The pure Word of God and the sacraments, and faithful pastors who share with them both good and bad. The Lord's hand punishes; but it also heals.*

On Sunday afternoon we travelled ten miles straight west to the Clear Lake congregation and held services in a school house. It was this congregation that was almost sure in their hope of getting a pastor this summer.** However, it did not turn out as expected and this was quite discouraging to the congregation. May it not become weary in praying to the Lord of the harvest for a true and righteous pastor, and do everything possible in arranging things so that they can get a place for their church and a little house for the pastor. On the knoll east of the little Clear Lake is the place where the church ought to be, in my opinion, since it is accessible to all. In any event I would say that the worst thing for a congregation to do is to struggle about where to build the church. In such questions those who have better sense and who have genuine zeal for the church must give in to the others in order that the congregation may not be utterly destroyed by such strife. What our friends in this congregation long for and greatly need is a pastor, and to get one soon. A good hearted man who had only one little room invited us to come with him home for the evening, and this invitation we gladly accepted. We anchored our craft alongside his wall and slept well in the wagon for the first time.

On August 7 we drove five miles and conducted services in a school-house in the western part of the Clear Lake congregation. There the poverty seemed to be greater and the grasshoppers had done more damage. But we did not hear so much about the grasshoppers and the temporal poverty as about the lack of a faithful Lutheran pastor and the preaching of the Word of God.

* According to Folwell, *Minnesota*, severe damage was done by the grasshoppers in Nicollet county in 1874, 1875, and 1876.

** Augustana Synod Minutes 1876: Nils Ohlund had been serving Clear Lake, had received and accepted a call to come as pastor after ordination; but at Christmas 1875 had served Bucklin, Missouri and had then accepted a call to that place, turning down the call to Clear Lake. After much discussion his view of the situation was accepted and he was ordained on the call to Bucklin, Missouri.

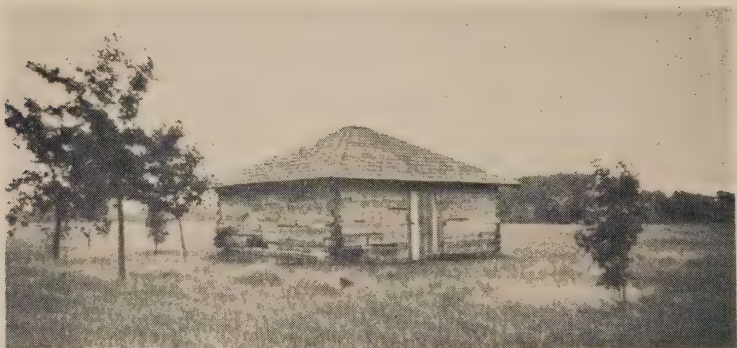


PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

*All that remains of old Fort Ridgely is this log cabin storehouse.
The fort was burned by the Sioux Indians in 1862.*

In the afternoon we drove straight west ten or twelve miles and came to the now ruined Fort Ridgely, which is situated on a bluff on the Minnesota River. It seems that most of the settlers in this region are Norwegians, and some Finns. The Norwegians, belonging to the Synod for the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, had recently secured a pastor and seemed to be happy because of it. Around here the grasshoppers have done a great deal of damage to the crops.

From there we went almost straight north twelve miles into Renville county with the Town of Palmyra as our destination. There we found a little settlement consisting mostly of settlers from Halland (a province in southern Sweden). A Lutheran congregation has been organized here and is known by the name Swedlanda. (Organized 1874. See Chapter 38.) We immediately sent out notice that services would be held the following day, the 8th, in the afternoon. In this locality sod houses are not uncommon. A sod house is very much like a pile of earth; but even in building a sod house it is possible to show good taste or poor taste; some houses of this kind even look inviting. Perhaps someone will wonder why they build sod houses. Well, it is simply because there are no trees out on the great prairies, nor any other building material. The settler drives out on the wild prairie with his load of goods; there he stops, unhitches his horses or oxen, and hitches them to the plow if he has one, and plows a piece of land. Then he takes the strips of sod and piles them up to build a house. A few sticks of wood are needed to hold up the roof, which consists of long,

coarse grass, covered by sod. Such houses are depressing to live in, especially in summer. It felt depressing to preach in them. Here in Swedlanda we had services in a newly built schoolhouse, made of lumber. Though the people were busy stacking the grain that the grasshoppers had left they all came to the service. We baptized four children, preached, and celebrated holy communion. Here we could see that the people were not saturated with sermons, as the case may be in the older congregations. They were evidently very attentive to the Word of God. May the Lord bless the seed that was sown! This congregation is small and new. Possibly it will grow, for there is plenty of land and fertile land, and some time a railroad, the Hastings and Dakota, will be built right through this settlement. It would be most suitable if Swedlanda and Clear Lake would belong together and have the same pastor.¹

On the 9th of August we traveled westward, towards the Minnesota River, passed Birch Coolie, where the Indians wrought havoc with our troops in the uprising in 1862. There still is a pile of bones left of the eighty horses that were killed there. Traveled on through Beaver Falls² where we met the lay preacher, M. Egbom of New Prairie.³ Two or three miles north of Beaver Falls there are a few Swedish settlers. We went in to one of these families, read the Word of God and offered prayer. This family had formerly lived at Fulton, Illinois. These few families living here have about twenty miles to New Prairie.⁴ The fine looking country led them to settle here; but there can never be any congregation here and they will have to live their lives without God's Word and sacraments. Settlement in scattered places is a great and destructive evil, which many will bitterly regret.⁵

We went on some distance beyond Sacred Heart Creek and stayed with a Swede, Mr. Johnson, who lives nine miles southeast of New Prairie. A few other Swedish families live in this neighborhood. After having sent notice that we would have services at New Prairie the next Sunday we drove to that place on the 10th and stayed with

¹ The Hastings and Dakota Railroad, which extended westward from Hastings through Shakopee, Glencoe, and Montevideo, was completed to Big Stone Lake in 1879. It reached Glencoe about August 14, 1872 but was not completed to Montevideo until some time in 1878. It was leased to the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Company in the early 1870's and is now a part of that line.

² The village of Beaver Falls in Beaver Falls township, Renville county was platted in 1866. It was the county seat until 1900, when county offices were moved to Olivia.

³ Melchior Egbom, licensed as lay preacher in 1872 by Augustana Synod.

⁴ Sacred Heart.

⁵ Norelius means that Swedes should settle together and form large colonies.

M. Egbom. There are a larger number of Swedes living in this region, but they are quite scattered. A congregation was organized here six years ago by Peter Carlson, and which for several years has been served by the above mentioned lay preacher.* There have also been occasional visits by our pastors. A few families have left the congregation and have joined the Norwegian Haugeans, as a result of the influence of one of their ministers, Lars Olsen, who comes here occasionally. This man does not seem to be so scrupulous about going into the Swedish congregations and causing division. There are many Norwegians in this region, divided among the Synod for the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Conference, and the Hauge Synod, consequently three different Lutheran bodies.

On Friday we had Bible study but on account of the busy season few were present. On Saturday we held catechization with the children who were to be confirmed the following day. There were six of them, and they had been given faithful and good instruction by M. Egbom. Sunday, the 13th was a festive day in New Prairie. We met at nine o'clock in the morning in a fairly large schoolhouse. The weather was threatening and the storm broke before the service was ended. The services began with baptism of several children, and ratification of emergency baptism. Then there was catechization and confirmation of the children, then communion address, sermon, and holy communion. It was past two o'clock when we were through, but no one seemed to be tired. Faithfulness to the Lord was the main theme of the meditations based on the gospel text for the day. Faithfulness to the Lord, who has been and is so faithful to us, does not exclude a faithful stewardship of earthly things, but on the contrary makes us faithful stewards of temporal gifts. Faithfulness to the Lord is not a slavish work under the law to merit grace and forgiveness of sin, but a true fruit of that grace and forgiveness we have received for the sake of Christ. May all, and especially the young people who this day confessed their willingness to belong to Jesus and to hold fast to the pure doctrine of God's Word in which they have been instructed, may they remain faithful until death, and with patience follow in the footsteps of Christ, awaiting the crown of life.

In rain and storm we drove from the services to the home of a Mr. Carlson. This evening it was a bit rough to go to bed in the wagon,

* New Prairie congregation — at present the Ebenezer, Sacred Heart — was received into the Synod 1875.

for out on the prairie it is not so calm and peaceful in a rainstorm. But the wind rocked us to sleep and we slept well under the shadow of the Almighty. However, we discovered that for safety's sake one ought to have a rope fastened to a stake at each end of the wagon to keep it from blowing over.

On Monday, August 14 we steered our course towards the southwestern part of Yellow Medicine county. We crossed the Minnesota River at the little town of Granite Falls. Three miles downstream is another little town called Minnesota Falls. In this part of the valley the river flows over bare granite blocks and forms several falls of considerable size. Almost the entire valley is full of granite walls and great blocks and stones of the same variety. The granite is stratified and is at an angle of about forty-five degrees with the surface of the ground. The forces of nature have been in tremendous activity here—an interesting field for the geologist.

After we had come up on the bluff on the west side we had seemingly an endless prairie before us. Until we came nearer the Yellow Medicine River which flows into the Minnesota from the west, we saw no human habitation. Along the above mentioned river Norwegians have settled for a distance of thirty or forty miles. When we had gone twenty-five miles from Granite Falls we came to a small Swedish settlement. Here we could see the heights in Dakota at a distance of some thirty miles.*

This settlement is about eight or ten miles from the Winona and St. Peter Railroad.** There is plenty of land and the soil is very good. In spite of the ravages of the grasshoppers the settlers had done quite well. Seven or eight miles down the Yellow Medicine River there were several Swedish families who could join with this settlement in forming a congregation. We announced services on the following day in the forenoon, although it was not a suitable time. It was threshing time. But what happened? It began to rain during the night and kept on all through the forenoon. Therefore they could do no threshing and they came to the services. No Swedish Lutheran pastor had been here before; but the lay preacher Egbom had visited the place a few times.

After edifying the people with the Word of God we spoke to them about their churchly arrangements, and they showed concern about

* Probably this was the Providence Valley settlement south of Dawson.

** The Winona and St. Peter Railroad was completed to New Ulm in 1871, and was extended westward in the next two years to reach Lake Kampeska in Dakota Territory in August, 1873. This line became a part of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Company.

having an established church activity with visits by a Lutheran pastor. This settlement can easily be joined to Sillerud¹ and Plum Creek² as a parish, and it is high time that this region now get a resident pastor.

In the afternoon of the 15th of August we said farewell to these countrymen and steered our course straight north towards Lac Qui Parle. The land was for the most part uninhabited. For a distance of fifteen miles there was not a sign of a claim shanty, or any human abode. The prairies are lovely, richly covered with grass and lie there waiting for the settler's plow. When one travels over these tremendous plains, which constitute a naturally fertile field which could provide sustenance for many thousands of people, the thoughts wander irresistibly backwards and forwards. One thinks back upon the thousands of years that these fertile plains have been lying waste and seemingly to no use, and one asks: Why is it thus, when so much stony, poor, and unsuitable land has been cultivated with sweat and toil, and where for a long time people have crowded one another and fought about the pieces? One thinks forward, and if the world yet stands for a few centuries, one can see in the imagination the many human beings that here will be born, will live, work, and die. Perhaps on this knoll, where I can see thirty or forty miles in every direction, out over a sea of grassland, there will be a Lord's temple from which streams of life-giving spiritual water will flow, and a people will here be building their homes and be trained for the heavenly home. And perhaps there will be a heathen temple here and multitudes of idol worshippers, oppressed and miserable people will populate these plains. Yea, Thou, Lord, knowest! How wonderful, how deep, how unsearchable are Thy thoughts!

When we came near the town of Lac Qui Parle we began to see the homes of pioneer settlers. The majority of settlers here are Norwegians. Wherever a little grove is found on these plains in the Northwest one can be almost certain to find one or more Norwegians. In the evening we arrived at the little town of Lac Qui Parle and stayed there overnight. This town has a very beautiful location. It was formerly a Presbyterian mission station among the Sioux Indians.³ There was

¹ Balaton.

² Walnut Grove.

³ The Sioux mission station at Lac Qui Parle was founded in July, 1835 by Thomas Smith Williamson and Alexander Huggins. It was supported by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.



Big Stone Lake.

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

only one Swede in the town, and another one lived in the country. Large Norwegian settlements are to be found here on both sides of the Minnesota River and Lac Qui Parle Lake, through which the river flows.

August 16.—Our destination today was Big Stone Lake. We traveled along the west side of the Minnesota River. The land was beautiful, but with few or no settlements. No Swedes were found. At the Yellow Banks River there was a German settlement. At a distance of five miles we had our first view of Big Stone Lake. It was a magnificent scene. The lower part of the lake, smooth as a mirror, lay before us, nestled between green bluffs. At the Whetstone River we crossed over into Dakota Territory, but soon we crossed the Minnesota River into our state at the end of Big Stone Lake.

Now we soon found some Swedes and were hospitably received in a sod house. A service was announced for the following day, when most of the Swedish people in the community, and some Norwegians, were present.

On Friday, the 18th of August, we had services in the upper part of the settlement in a log cabin, which had been built by seven persons, to serve as a meeting place. The chinks between the logs were still open, and the roof was made of grass and sod. While we preached we had a good little instructor in the form of a golden-crested wren which had built its nest in the grass under the sod directly above where we stood. The bird was busy feeding its young, and they chirped their joy whenever they received anything. This was a living reminder to me of the right use of God's Word. The pastor is to feed the flock

with the pure, unadulterated Word of God; he shall rightly divide the word of truth, and give it out in such portions that even the young and inexperienced can receive it. The hearers should not only hear the Word, but eat and be nourished by it that they may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. They should also thank and praise God for the great gift of His Word.

In the evening we drove out into the country and stayed with two families who lived somewhat apart from the others, and there we baptized one child and had a devotional service. The Big Stone country is a magnificent, beautiful and productive country. The lake is about thirty-six miles long and one to two miles wide, and has several larger or smaller forested islands. It resembles somewhat Lake Chautauqua in New York. It is surrounded by immense prairies, which on the Minnesota side slope towards the lake forming ravines here and there in which trees grow. Between these bluffs and the lake is a strip of bottomland wide enough for ordinary sized farms. Along the bluff, and the lake, as far as we traveled there were a number of springs, with more or less iron in the water. In a number of places one could detect at a distance the odor of alkali water.

From the lower end of the lake and about ten miles up along the east shore the Swedes have settled on the bottomland, and some live up on the prairie. There is room for a large settlement. Some Norwegians live there also and Pastors Sangstad and Moen of the Conference visit them and have organized a congregation to which the Swedes also belong for the time being. They desire however to get a Swedish pastor as soon as possible. According to all indications the Big Stone settlement has a future. The scattered families living here and there in various places in the Northwest, if they have a desire to belong to a Swedish Lutheran congregation, ought to move to this place.

On Saturday the 19th of August we set out on the journey back again down the river, this time on the east side. We traveled approximately forty-five miles during the day. We found no Swedes until we came into Chippewa county; five or six miles before we came to the little town of Montevideo at the Chippewa River we met a few Swedish families. They had affiliated with a Norwegian congregation belonging to the Norwegian-Danish Augustana Synod. In this region one finds no less than four Lutheran church bodies represented. This is not conducive to unity or to churchly Christian edification. It is a very sad state of affairs. Why do our Swedish people have to get en-



PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sod house in western Minnesota, and triple yoke ox team.

tangled in these unhappy struggles? And still it has happened and is happening in more than one place.

Four miles below Montevideo we came to a little settlement where there is a congregation called Strombeck. Here we stayed over the Tenth Sunday after Trinity, held services, baptized several children, and celebrated the Lord's Supper in a schoolhouse. The people seemed to rejoice over our visit. Some had come fifteen miles to attend the services.

In the evening we crossed the Minnesota River and visited a poor invalid, conducted devotions and gave communion to the sick man. It was a strength to the soul to visit this sickbed. The man was Swedish and the wife Norwegian, and they had, if I remember correctly, ten children, and it seemed that they all were small. The dear Lord had dealt with this family in a strange manner. Several years ago the man had received a severe cut in the abdomen. After this had healed he cut himself in the knee. Last year he was run over by a reaper and got his right leg cut off and the left leg broken in two places and severely maimed. The poor man had to lie out on the field from one day to the next before he got medical care. Ever since then he has been bed-ridden and suffering agony. He was not now able to sit in the bed. They lived in a miserable sod hut, and this summer the grasshoppers had destroyed a large part of their crop. But we heard no complaint. The man's face seemed to beam with Christian joy, and God was giving him and his family daily support. Under such cir-

cumstances one can see what the Christian hope really can mean. You who deny Christ and the teachings of the Bible, what has your faith and your religion done for you?

Ten miles from Strombeck up Hawk Creek some Swedish families have settled. We visited them on Monday forenoon, August 21, preached there and celebrated holy communion, and also baptized one child. Most of the settlers here have become Baptists, but there still are eight or ten families left [who are Lutherans]. Though the distance is rather great, they can belong to the Strombeck congregation, and this congregation could form a parish together with New Prairie.*

In the afternoon we continued our journey to Willmar and were hospitably received by our old friend, Pastor O. Paulson, who lives here and works among his Norwegian countrymen. Herewith our missionary journey was ended. I went home by train, and Brother Carlson turned his vehicle homeward, being on the lookout for Swedes around Hutchinson and Preston Lake. However, he did not find many, and those he met had drifted into neglect of the Word of God, or had no desire for it.

Our journey lasted eighteen days. We traveled 348 miles and slept ten nights in our wagon. We gave twenty-five sermons and addresses; had four communion services; baptized eleven children and confirmed six. Our expenses for the whole journey were about twenty-five dollars. The Lord granted us health and we felt better at the end of the journey than when we set out. From this we can see that one does not need to be helpless even though poor. It is possible in summer time, at very small expense, to visit the new settlements where no pastors are stationed. Such visits can have an incalculable value. One thing more and then I shall close: Altogether too little is being done to try to get our scattered people to settle where congregations already exist or can be established. It is sad to see how many act thoughtlessly in regard to this matter although they otherwise seem to be churchly minded. People settle in places and communities where no Swedish Lutheran congregation can ever be organized. May they come to see what a mistake this is, and plan so that they can find it possible to partake of the privileges of the household of God.

* This parish alignment became a reality and was in effect until 1936. In the meantime the Salem congregation had come into existence in the city of Montevideo, and Salem and Strombeck formed a parish until 1946 when the Strombeck congregation merged with the one in Montevideo.

A Pause for Perspective

Those who have been patient enough to follow the steps of the home missionaries over hill and dale, through the Big Woods and across the prairies, to Lake Superior and the Red River and the Big Sioux, will now have read of the establishment of 110 congregations in the Minnesota Conference. If the glamor and the glory of pioneering have been reduced to drab routine by our recounting of this story, we may remember that the actors in the drama also found the way a bit tedious as they plodded the weary miles afoot or with a horse that was blind or lame. Home missionary pioneers did not see much glamor. They saw mud and dust, heat and mosquitoes, snow and cold, poverty and struggle and sacrifice. Their glory was their faithfulness and zeal in proclaiming the Word of God.

As Norelius and Carlson paused on a high rise of land in Yellow Medicine county to take a long view all around and to do a bit of meditating on history and the ways of God, so we may pause and try to get a historical perspective at this point in our story. About 1875 the Minnesota Conference had practically reached its present geographical boundaries, except for the Iron Range district. Minnesota did not yet know of the wealth in those northern hills. In the Red River Valley the foundations had been laid for another conference which was to become a reality a generation later. The membership of the Minnesota Conference reached the 10,000 mark in 1875 for the first time (10,503 communicants; 18,163 baptized members.) Thirty-one pastors ministered to these people and sought to gather in the dispersed countrymen.

It is time for us to pause and ask, What sort of people were they, these men and women who established the Lutheran Minnesota Conference? Were they all deeply religious? Were they heroes of faith? Did they set a noble example of virtue and piety? Did they always sacrifice and serve in a spirit of true devotion, constrained by the love of Christ in their hearts?

Already our account has given abundant evidence that they were no such models of perfection, religiously or otherwise. They were men

and women of like passions with us. They had to struggle for their existence. When discouragements came, and failure seemed inevitable, they were tempted to despair. When they succeeded and the future seemed rosy they were tempted to become proud and careless.

Today the Minnesota Conference is an Americanized church group. In its beginnings it was wholly an immigrant group, consisting of people who had come from Sweden, with a small percentage of Norwegians until 1870. They were mainly of the poorer classes. They came here to better their condition, which they had scant hope of doing in their native land. It was practically impossible for a *torpare* in Sweden, or his sons, to acquire ownership of a piece of land. They worked on the large estates of rich land owners, receiving in return the right to use a little portion of land, but the products of their toil would never be enough to enable them to buy their own home. The sons might learn a simple trade, but wages were low and their opportunity for economic independence was small.

Social class distinctions were almost as rigid as in a caste system. Customs and traditions that had developed through the centuries were not easy to break. The poor man was supposed to stay in his place and be content to work for someone else, and to show due regard to those who had more high-sounding titles than he.

• While many of the immigrants had managed to save up money enough for transportation to America, there were great numbers who borrowed the money, on the promise of paying it out of their earnings in the "dollar land." However, we find that some had sold farms and personal property in Sweden and arrived in America with sufficient money in their pockets to make a good start in their new homeland.

It would be a mistake to think that these people were ignorant and illiterate, even though they were poor. Sweden had a school system which, though far from perfect, made it possible for most children to learn to read, and many also had the rudiments of writing and arithmetic. The great number of "America letters," written by immigrants to their relatives and friends back home, testify to the fact that many of these people could write. It must be said, however, that very few of the immigrants had advanced far in their education. If anyone had a little knowledge of bookkeeping he would soon find himself elected to public office. (Eric Norelius was elected county auditor of Goodhue county in 1858, but did not accept. Cederstam was a member of the constitutional convention in 1857. Otto Wallmark was auditor of Chi-

sago county. Daniel Anderson was auditor of Isanti county. Hans Mattson held various offices including secretary of state of Minnesota.)

The political situation here was different from that in Sweden. The immigrants generally were not slow in learning to take an active interest in the election of officials, local, state, and national. On the national level it was not hard for the Swedish immigrant to choose his favorite political party. To be a Republican meant to be against slavery, and for free soil. If any further arguments were needed, it was enough to know that the Democratic party was the party of the Irish. To be "Augustana" in religion meant to be "Republican" in politics almost without exception until the days of John Lind.

We have already made mention of the fact that the greater number of immigrants in the early period were farmers. This was true even down to the beginning of the twentieth century. Of the emigrants leaving Sweden 1851-60, 15,184 were from rural districts, and only 1,711 from urban districts; 1861-70, rural 103,720; urban, 18,727. Gradually the proportion of urban emigrants increased, but the majority always came from the rural districts. And we have seen that the majority of those who came to Minnesota sought homes on the land. A free homestead was an inducement hard to resist. It seemed like a dream to the *torpare* from Sweden. Hard work did not deter him. He was used to that. Now he could work for himself, establish his own home and live very much as he pleased.

The pioneer was an individualist. There can be no doubt about that. Yet he also found it necessary, profitable, and pleasant to work together with others. Even in the most primitive pioneer community the settler soon found that he was not altogether self-sufficient. There was the job of building his log cabin. It was much easier if three or four neighbors could help one another with the heavy tasks. There were times when cooperation was absolutely essential. Perhaps only one or a very few farmers in a community had oxen, and the job of clearing and plowing must be done on a cooperative basis. In times of emergency, such as sickness, fire, or other calamity, there was no question about whether or not one should help a neighbor. In planning for the future, the goal was something higher than to gain material wealth and personal prestige. As Frederick Jackson Turner has said:

"These pioneers knew that they were leaving many dear associations of the old home, giving up many of the comforts of life, sacrificing things which those who remained thought too vital to civilization to

be left. But they were not mere materialists ready to surrender all that life is worth for immediate gain. They were idealists themselves, sacrificing the ease of the immediate future for the welfare of their children, and convinced of the possibility of helping to bring about a better social order and a freer life. They were social idealists. But they based their ideals on trust in the common man and their readiness to make adjustments, not on the rule of a benevolent despot or a controlling class. . . .

"The West laid emphasis upon the practical and demanded that ideals should be put to work for useful ends; ideals were tested by their direct contributions to the betterment of the average man, rather than by the production of the man in exceptional genius and distinction.

"For, in fine, this was the goal of the Middle West: the welfare of the average man, not only the man of the South or of the East, the Yankee or the Irishman or the German, but all men in one common fellowship. This was the hope of their youth, of that youth when Abraham Lincoln rose from railsplitter to country lawyer, from Illinois legislator to congressman, and from congressman to President." (*Minnesota History Bulletin*, Volume 3, August, 1920. Pp. 405, 411).

This idealism of the pioneers has found its greatest and finest expression in the establishment of churches and a Christian home and community life. And as long as there are many such communities one can speak of Christian democracy in the United States, even though we well know that the majority of the population does not even belong to a church.

The Swedish immigrants had been accustomed to a state church, where they had little or nothing to say as to how it should be organized and managed, and where they felt little or no responsibility for the financial support of the church nor for church discipline. Many of the immigrants when they said farewell to the fatherland, said also a final farewell to the church. Cold statistics give evidence of this sad fact. In 1870 there were 20,987 Swedish-born people in Minnesota, and a great many came in the early 'seventies. Yet the Minnesota Conference had only 10,503 communicant members in 1875. Some, of course, had joined other churches, but thousands had no church affiliation and did not desire any.

The encouraging and inspiring part of the story is that those ten thousand had of their own free will and conviction, with no compulsion except the inner voice, banded themselves together into congrega-

tions and a Conference, and together with other thousands in other states, into a Synod, had taken upon themselves the duty of supporting the church, training pastors, maintaining missions, and establishing a church discipline enforced, under the Word of God, by a church board elected by themselves.

It would be an exaggeration to say that the Swedish immigrants left home on account of religious persecution. But it is a true and significant fact that the religious situation was such as to cause great dissatisfaction on the part of those who were pious and serious in their Christian life. This dissatisfaction, combined with the other factors we have mentioned, economic and social conditions, was the cause of the discontent which led multitudes to think of leaving Sweden.

A great religious awakening began in Sweden about 1840. We shall not attempt to tell the story of this movement, but merely to point out that it was largely a layman's movement, and for a long time was carried on against the opposition of most of the state church clergymen. There were exceptions. In some parishes the pastors gladly took part in the movement, and welcomed the activities of visiting lay preachers who were able to accomplish what the pastors themselves could not do.

Some of the newly aroused religious leaders were fanatics and separatists, but the great majority of the people had no desire to break away from the Lutheran Church. It was a Methodist from England, George Scott, who began to preach in Stockholm and to awaken the people to a sense of their spiritual need. He did not urge them to leave the church in which they were brought up, but he sought to infuse new

* * *

A Preacher by Trade

"When one has no prospect of finding a way to make a living, one is inclined to use any method to earn one's support. I must admit that I did not have much respect for the preaching of God's Word but now I began to set myself forth as a preacher, believing that thereby I could earn some wages and get something for my support. But I do not believe that any true and sincere Christian could do such a thing, i.e., preach only for the purpose of earning money. Unfortunately there are many such preachers who serve only their belly, and I was like one of these, but I earned nothing and was forced to quit my lofty profession."

Lars Anderson, Ms in Augustana College Archives, Rock Island, Ill.

life into a church that was too formalistic and spiritually cold. Yet he was mobbed in the midst of a religious service, and driven out of Sweden. C. O. Rosenius, a fervent and pious layman became his successor. As a preacher and writer he had a tremendous influence upon the people of Sweden for over twenty years, and some of his books are still being read. His contribution to the spiritual life of Sweden is immeasurable. He called people from a life of worldliness and vanity to a life of personal faith and consecration to the Lord. Peter Fjellstedt, the teacher and missionary; Peter Wieselgren, the temperance advocate; Oskar Ahnfeldt, the singer, were among the leaders in the movement. The results were to be seen in every part of Sweden, and were carried over to America by the immigrants. The Augustana Synod owes much to the influence of Rosenius, Fjellstedt, Wieselgren, and Ahnfeldt.

Sweden had a law known as the Conventicle Act which forbade religious gatherings except under the direct control of the church. When the religious awakening came, the church authorities in many places called upon the sheriff to enforce the law. Peaceful neighborhood prayer meetings were rudely broken up, where no crime had been committed or contemplated. At the same time there were ministers who appeared in their pulpits under the influence of liquor, and yet were allowed to continue in the ministry and to receive their support from the state.

There were true and faithful pastors, men who sought the spiritual welfare of the people, men who lived a life of personal piety and noble character, men who spoke out against the liquor evil and the worldliness that was prevalent everywhere. But it often happened that such pastors found that they were out of favor with the bishops, and were called to account for their activities, whereas others who drank and played cards with their parishioners were promoted and favored.

The pious people were derisively called *läsare* (readers). That name, given to them in a spirit of contempt, became an honorable term. They read the Bible, the Psalm book, and the old substantial Lutheran devotional books.

It was in the midst of this great religious movement that the founders of the Augustana Synod left Sweden. Though their outward environment underwent a change that made it hard for them to adjust their lives here in America, the inner, spiritual environment did not suffer a radical change. Their faith in Christ, their respect for the

Word of God, their personal piety, these were realities which they could take along with them to America. Most of the pastors who came from Sweden to the Augustana Synod in pioneer times were *läsare* pastors. The same type of Christian life was found in many of the lay people. They gathered, as soon as they had settled in their new homeland, to have religious services together. They looked forward to the day when they could have a pastor. But until the time that this could be, they met under lay leadership, and we have seen that in many instances they organized congregations or at least considered themselves as constituting a congregation informally, before any pastor arrived.

The early pastors of the pioneer churches in Minnesota were not highly educated. Eric Norelius went to high school in Sweden and he attended a Lutheran institution belonging to the Ohio Synod, at Columbus, Ohio, but it was a young and undeveloped school. His course there was a combination of college and seminary. However, most of the other pastors who served in the Minnesota Conference in early days, had less formal education than he. Cederstam had done some studying in Sweden, mostly under private tutelage, but had had no theological course. Andrew Jackson was a schoolmaster who became ordained after a ten months' course of training for the ministry. Peter Carlson was a colporteur and lay preacher. Hedengran had very meager training for the ministry.

They were summoned to their task because of the great need, and because no ordained men were available. Few pastors in Sweden were willing to come over and go to work in the wilderness with no assurance as to where their support would come from. Consequently the pioneer churches did the best they could under the circumstances. They used men who had faith in God and zeal for the work, even if they lacked in the matter of formal schooling. It may almost be said that the whole Conference activity for several years was a layman's movement, and a youth movement. But these pioneers were not content to go on indefinitely without a well trained leadership. The story of Christian higher education in the Minnesota Conference begins in the early pioneer period. It is our purpose to give a brief account of those beginnings in the next chapter.

Gustavus Adolphus College

Its Beginning in Red Wing

(This chapter and the two following chapters, which relate the early history of Gustavus Adolphus College, are taken almost verbatim from the history of the college, "A History of Eighty Years" written by Dr. Conrad Peterson in 1942. The author expresses sincere gratitude to Dr. Peterson for permission to use this material.)

When the Minnesota Conference was organized in 1858 the need of trained pastors was keenly felt. Various attempts were made to call ordained pastors from Sweden but not one came to Minnesota. The need of teachers in the congregations also became apparent. The public school system in Minnesota was still in its infancy, and even where such schools existed, the congregations felt that they could never be adequate, since no religious instruction was given. Parochial schools were established or at least attempted in many of the early congregations. But to get trained teachers was a problem. Only a few of the Swedish immigrants had education enough to fill such a position.

The Synod laid the foundations of the present Augustana College and Theological Seminary in Chicago in 1860. But to the people in Minnesota this new institution seemed far away and would hardly be able to satisfy the crying need of such a vast field. It was feared that Minnesota would suffer while fields nearer at hand were supplied. Laymen as well as clergymen longed for an institution within the Conference which would minister to the needs of the west.

Doubtless the idea was first born in the mind of Eric Norelius. He started the work as an experiment and carried it through its first year without any pecuniary reward. The school remained a private venture, without official connections, while he conducted it. Red Wing, the birthplace of the college, was equally disinterested and had no aspiration to become the permanent home of the institution.

The church in Red Wing was a simple frame structure, about twenty-six feet wide and thirty feet long, located at the corner of Franklin and Fifth Streets. It was nicknamed "The Swedish barn," and ultimately transformed into a dwelling house. On May 16, 1862, the congregation appropriated twenty dollars in order to equip the

church for parochial school purposes and also "in order that older persons from other places might attend, receive instruction and prepare themselves for higher studies elsewhere." These twenty dollars were, therefore, the first money appropriated for the cause of the college.

It was not the first time a similar idea had entered the mind of Norelius. In 1856 Peter Carlson, who later became closely connected with the school, consulted him about the possibility of acquiring an education. He then wrote that Norelius "does not consider it impossible, although I am somewhat old. And he offered that if I would come to him for a year to begin with, he would, for some consideration, give me as much of his time as possible. The same offer included the Norwegian man, Halvor Strand, if he desired to come along." (*Yearbook, Swedish Historical Society of America, 1923-1924, p. 93.*) At that time, however, the idea did not bear fruit.

But in 1862 the time was ripe. The Minnesota Conference, at a meeting in East Union in October urged Norelius to prepare such youths as the congregations might send so that they might be fitted to become teachers in the Swedish and English languages as the need of teachers was unbearably great. The need of training in the English language was thus recognized from the beginning.

The first pupil was Jonas Magnuson (later Magny) from Chisago Lake, a stepson of Håkan Swedberg, one of the laymen present at the organization of the Conference.

Throughout the fall term of 1862 Magny was the only student in the school at Red Wing. He formed a part of the professor's household, paying one dollar a month for his room and seventy-five cents a week for board. The pastor's study was his first lecture room, and tuition was free. When the faculty was called away on other missions, perhaps for days at a time, the student body would indulge in athletic exercises in the form of wood chopping.

Before Christmas five new students arrived, to take up work after the holidays; and by the middle of January there were eleven in all. (A report mentioning thirty-three students at Red Wing must, if correct, have included local parochial pupils.) There were several lady students, two of whom (Mrs. A. Jackson and Mrs. J. J. Frodeen) later became the wives of school presidents. Co-education was thus established from the beginning, a score of years before anything worthy of the name was found in any other institution within the Augustana Synod.

The Red Wing experiment seemed to be a success, and the Conference was willing to take it over. In January 1863 the question of the location of the school—a question which long continued to be mooted—was referred to the local churches. Vasa, St. Paul, and East Union appeared as candidates, and the decision was left to a referendum, to be conducted in the local congregations. The vote was light, less than a thousand votes. East Union, doubtless most interested, won the election with 409 votes, against 278 for St. Paul and 242 for Vasa. The East Union congregation consequently received the school, with the stipulation that it was going to subscribe three hundred dollars to the building fund. It is typical of the time that it was thought wise to locate the school in a rural settlement, where it never was within three miles of a railway station, instead of in a town.

Meanwhile the old church in Red Wing, with its rude seats and moveable blackboard, was used industriously. Instruction was imparted in Swedish and English grammar and spelling, arithmetic, geography, penmanship, vocal, and Christianity. The year ended with a public examination. Five were declared ready to fill positions as teachers. Three later became ministers: Jonas Magny, J. G. Lagerstrom, and John S. Nilson. Magny, the first student, was twenty years old at the time when he enrolled. After further studies at the synodical institution in Paxton, Illinois, he was ordained in 1870 and gave forty years of service in the ministry, all in the Minnesota Conference.

Rev. Andrew Jackson, whose congregations had been broken up by the Sioux outbreak in 1862, was engaged to serve as financial solicitor for the school while on missionary travels in the Conference. He was called to become the head of the school in 1863. In June of that year the whole matter was referred to the Augustana Synod which already had one educational institution on its young hands and naturally was interested in a possible rival. The newcomer was welcomed, on condition that it be placed in the right relation to the school in Illinois. In its constitution, unanimously adopted by the Synod, the school received its first name, Minnesota Elementary School. The name had a Swedish connotation which really implied that it was a school of secondary education. It was to have a threefold purpose: to provide a general education, to train teachers, and to prepare for entrance to the Augustana Seminary.

The school remained under the joint control of Conference and Synod during the whole East Union period; but the responsibility

rested on the Conference, and the ratification of its acts became more and more perfunctory.

The first board of eight directors was nominated by the members from Minnesota and ratified by the whole Synod. The first board members were: Eric Norelius and Håkan Olson, Red Wing, for four years; C. A. Hedengran and Håkan Swedberg, Chisago Lake, for three years; Peter Carlson, East Union, and Elof Anderson, Watertown, two years; Nils Olsen, Christiania, and Johan Johanson, St. Paul, one year. The first board meeting was held in St. Paul on August 18, 1863, when Norelius was elected chairman. Rules of conduct were adopted. Applicants were to present testimonials and must be able to read fluently. Recitations were to continue from eight A.M. until noon and from two to five P.M. About one hour daily was to be set aside for opening and closing religious exercises. There were to be no classes on Saturdays and Sundays. The year was to close with a public examination. No pupils under ten years of age were to be admitted.

Gustavus Adolphus College

The East Union Period 1863-1876

The location chosen for the school was in the East Union settlement, in Carver county, a few miles from West Union, which was almost equally interested in the work, and not far from the town of Carver. The institution was generally referred to as "the school at Carver" when it was not simply nicknamed "Jackson's school," in honor of the man who gave his best years to its service and put his stamp upon it.

"Minnesota Elementary School" did not prove a very inspiring name, but in 1865 the Conference hit upon a better title. Scandinavian Lutherans were then celebrating the one thousandth anniversary of the death of St. Ansgar, the first Christian missionary to Sweden, sometimes called "the apostle of the North." It seemed appropriate to adopt the name of St. Ansgar's Academy, and the institution was incorporated under that title.

Rev. Andrew Jackson served as the principal of the school during the whole Carver period except for the year 1873-74. He was the chief and often the only, instructor as well. Stern and strict to outward appearance, he was full of sympathy and understanding for his pupils. He was their spiritual father and inculcated manly uprightness and piety from day to day by his example. An ardent sportsman and of great physical power, he allowed his rugged constitution to be weakened by the strain of overwork. Most of the time he was also the treasurer, librarian, and all in all of the institution. For this work he received the princely salary of four hundred dollars a year to begin with. To be sure, this was an average minister's salary in the pioneer years. The tuition which, on the average, amounted to about one dollar a month per student,—supposedly five dollars for each term, but not always punctually or fully paid—never sufficed to cover his salary. During the first years the balance was made good by the local congregations, in return for preaching services. The Synod added one hundred dollars for the first year but expected Jackson to give missionary work in vacant congregations during the summer months in return. The next year the synodical appropriation dwindled to fifty dollars; and during the year following it dwindled fifty dollars more. Except

for the last year, the salary never amounted to much more. Naturally an assistant teacher could not expect more than twenty-five dollars a month, with or without board, while student instructors received much less. They all had to be thankful to boot if the payment was not far in arrears. All legitimate bills were, however, paid sooner or later.

In 1855 the East Union congregation began the erection of a simple little church, built of aspen logs, about thirty feet wide and thirty-six feet long. The structure soon proved too small, and the work was never completed. Religious services were, nevertheless, still conducted here during the first years of the school. The building still stands, now altered and renovated, and serves as a parish house, with the name of St. Ansgar's Hall. Here the school was opened in the fall of 1863. It was later bought from the congregation for three hundred dollars and some very necessary alterations made. During the first winter and spring, before improvements were made, it proved a poor protection from the cold. Teacher and students were reported suffering from illness, particularly from chest troubles, and the first death in the school family was recorded.

A campus of five acres, located a little south of the church, was bought and presented to the school by some Scandinavian soldiers of Company H of the Ninth Minnesota. In the summer of 1866 the building was partly torn down and rebuilt on the new land. It was now divided into two stories, and three rooms were partitioned off on the main floor. One room was occupied by the lady students, and another served as a library. The first living room, the beginning of a dormitory department, was also fitted out. The pupils sat on benches around three long tables in the schoolroom proper. Close to the pulpit was a bench which was occupied by the class which happened to recite, thirty minutes to an hour at a time.

Various plans were tried, one after the other, in order to make the school more of a success. An effort was made to improve accommodations. In 1869 the school building was increased fourteen feet in length, with a brick basement supporting the new addition. The height of the sides was raised so as to secure two full stories. The building was clad with boards on the outside and plastered on the inside. By means of unpainted pine boards, with many a crack between, the second story was partitioned off into several living rooms for students or assistant teachers; but it took some years before the whole story had been supplied with flooring and ceiling and fitted out to its full capacity. One little heating stove and several students would share the same room,

unless the wind caused the smoke from the former to expel the latter, as frequently happened.

It was difficult for the students to secure board and lodging in the beginning. In 1865 one family undertook to supply board and laundry, etc., for three students who were receiving beneficiary aid. This was spoken of as the beginning of a boarding department. The Education Committee supplied some furniture and utensils and undertook to pay two dollars a week for each student, *in natura* gifts being accepted as

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A St. Ansgar School Boy

"I am sure it was through mother's influence that I was sent to St. Ansgar's Academy instead of to St. Peter, which, at that time, had more advanced and better equipped schools; besides, being only thirteen miles away, I could have gone home every Saturday. While I would have rather gone to St. Peter, I was glad of the chance to go to school at any place.

"The Omaha railroad was under construction but was not yet completed to St. Peter. Like most of the farmers at that time, we had only oxen, so father made arrangements with a neighbor, who had a span of horses, to take me along when he brought his daughter, who was of my age, to the same school. We arrived on the date set for the school to open, which was the first part of September. The finishing of the school building, which had been enlarged during the summer, would not be ready for a week. Our neighbor made arrangements with a nearby farmer for room and board for his daughter as there was no dormitory for girls, and I secured accommodations there also until the new addition was completed."

* * *

"Rev. Jackson was a most excellent teacher, devoted to his work. While he was stern in appearance and did not tolerate mirth, yet, back of that serious appearance was a kind heart. He was clear in his statements, exacting in his demands, and refused to take excuses for failures in our lessons. While at times I thought he was severe he was always fair and in the end one could not help but admire him. I never had a teacher that I respected more than Rev. Jackson, and I believe that was generally true of all the students."

Peter P. Quist, "Recollections from my school days at St. Ansgar's Academy" in *Bulletin of the American Institute of Swedish Arts, Literature, and Science*. Vol. I, No. 3, January 1945, P. 11, 15.

part payment. The menu included such luxuries as coffee, tea, and apples, not to mention necessities like molasses. In 1869 a boarding department, with a matron at its head, was established in the school building. For two years the kitchen served as a dining room as well. As it proved too small for a score or more of boarders, a kitchen extension was later added. Some pupils boarded at home or elsewhere, and some boarded themselves, carrying enough supplies with them from home to suffice for the five school days of the week. Some received free board, and those who declared that it was their purpose to enter the service of the church paid only \$1.50 per week. This led some doubtful candidates to make such a declaration. With the aid of *in natura* gifts from friends of the school, the dining department barely paid for itself. The average student's expenses must have fallen considerably below one hundred dollars a year.

Labor was cheap, common labor commanding one dollar a day and skilled labor not more than twice that amount. By means of such labor, a small but quite substantial residence for the teacher was erected in 1864-65. It later became the residence of the church warden. A stable, a fence, a well, etc. were gradually added, and the land was partly cultivated.

In 1867 St. Ansgar's Academy acquired another piece of property, a flour mill. This venture has been spoken of as the first attempt to build up an endowment fund for the support of the institution, a goal which it was going to take almost half a century to reach. An assured income of a thousand dollars a year would have given the little school financial security, it seemed, but this was not in sight. The financial outlook was indeed dark. It was then that some, especially Rev. Peter Carlson, pastor at East Union, and warm friend of the Conference school, conceived the optimistic idea that a flour mill would yield the necessary income. A "Mission Mill Company" secured control of a fall in Bevens Creek and became responsible for the building of a mill. This was to be deeded to the Conference, and all profits above costs were to be turned over to the school. Mr. A. J. Carlson, who was both loyal and capable, was secured as miller. There were times when the outlook seemed good, and the property did serve as security for the loan of a few hundred dollars sadly needed by the school. In the long run, however, the mill netted little but trouble. At one time the water was too low, at another time so high that the flood carried away the dam. Finally a steam engine had to be purchased in order to have dependable power. It was becoming harder for small flour mills to



PHOTO COURTESY EAST UNION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Bevens Creek, Carver County, Minnesota.

compete with bigger competitors. The mill was finally saddled with a debt of more than six thousand dollars. When the school was removed to St. Peter the Ansgar Society purchased all the school property from the Conference for one thousand dollars. This society sold the mill to a private company which conducted it for many years with varying success. It was later sold to another company and finally removed. A small millstone remains to grace the present college campus in St. Peter.

There have always been a few self-sacrificing individuals, some of them possessed of but little learning themselves, who have sought to make up for the apathy of the majority by their devotion. Such a man was Peter Carlson, than whom the school never had a warmer friend. He was the first treasurer of the Education Committee, an institution which remained for about thirty years and served as a kind of local executive committee, having charge especially of beneficiary aid to students who had the service of the church in view. Rev. Carlson naively and piously recorded his sentiments together with the financial accounts. When the school was opened, on October 15, 1863, there was not a cent on hand for salaries and other expenses, and no assurance as to where the money was to come from, but Carlson had a faith not easily put to shame.

The greater part of the charity was furnished by local families.

They often provided free board and lodging, and more besides, for poor students. The school was remembered by money, fuel and other gifts *in natura*. Missionary and sewing societies within the Conference were heard from. It was no plutocracy to whom the school turned for support, and collections and individual donations were not large. A widow who gave twenty-five cents, and the servant girl who gave one dollar, were as gladly listed as the soldier who gave the unusual sum of ten dollars. It is interesting to note the sympathy for the school among soldiers. About one hundred men went out from East and West Union to serve in the Civil War. Several of them were enrolled as students for a while, either before or after service. Few were the students who did not have near friends or relatives in the ranks of blue. One item from 1864-65 records: "Collection from our soldiers in Fort Snelling, \$6.15." As previously mentioned, soldiers donated the ground which became the first school campus.

One student, A. Engholm, who had the ministry in view, was drafted and died in a military camp. He bequeathed his little collection of books to the school. The Conference decided that this was to be the nucleus of a school library and, by direct resolve, enriched it by the purchase of a Webster's Dictionary. Some textbooks, previously secured, were added to the collection. (Textbooks, by the way, were sometimes hard to secure and were largely imported from Sweden.) According to decision, the books were to be moved to St. Peter, which was partly, but not entirely carried into effect. The present college library thus had its inception in East Union in 1865.

In 1868 the Conference authorized the purchase of a box or case in which the manuscript minutes of the Conference should be preserved. It was stipulated that this should be kept at the library of St. Ansgar's school. This became the nucleus of the present Conference and college archives.

The school was the first born among the institutions of the Conference and the Conference treasurer, Mr. J. Johanson of St. Paul was the first treasurer of the school fund. In 1864 more than one thousand dollars had been gathered for the building fund. It was soon spent. From 1866 on we can speak of a school debt, and debt was a serious matter when the rate of interest was ten per cent or more, as was the case in the 'sixties and 'seventies. Jackson was able to raise another thousand dollars for building purposes in 1868 and 1869 while another teacher relieved him of some of his work as a teacher. In 1870 the Conference was asked, for the first time, to appropriate a set sum of ten

cents per communicant for the school. To begin with, however, this was not a tax but a free gift. Clergymen were to report whether their local charges were willing to give the asked for amount or not. In 1871 the question of an endowment fund came up, the flour mill evidently being a forlorn hope by this time. Rev. J. O. Cavallin succeeded in soliciting a few hundred dollars for this fund; but they were soon consumed by running expenses. The actual outcome of the endowment question was that it led to the removal of the school from East Union. In 1872 the congregations were simply asked to contribute to school salaries "in the best manner." In 1873 every minister made himself responsible for a fixed sum which was to be collected in his field. In 1875 the Conference asked for fifteen cents per communicant. Ten cents would have sufficed, but the extra amount was added to make up for delinquents. In 1876 the few remaining debts became the heritage of the new institution in St. Peter.

Students were roughly divided into three or more classes; but they continued to study the same subjects, very largely, in class after class. This was true even in the case of those who attended St. Ansgar's for four years or more. Instruction in Christianity was most advanced. The Swedish language preponderated in and out of the classroom. There were a few who enrolled only in Swedish classes while others did all their work in English. Norwegian was sometimes taught. Many students only wanted a little instruction in the English language. American and other History and Geography were on the program. The natural sciences were neglected. Some students ascended to Algebra in Mathematics. During some years a few students were far enough advanced to receive instruction in the rudiments of Latin, Greek and German. All who had an ear for music took part in the singing, which was conducted without the aid of instruments for several years. In 1867-68 a "melodion" was presented to the school. The first music lessons were then given by Mr. Lindstrom who had been a student in the Augustana institution at Paxton, Ill.

St. Ansgar students in general were a quiet and well behaved and hard working lot. There never was such a thing as an organized student society among them. A few were boys of ten, many others mature men. There were several choice "originals" among them. The oldest student began his studies at the age of fifty-six and persevered until he was sixty. Those whose hearts were of the right kind were urged to take up studies, even though their heads were not so strong. The result of such a policy was what might be expected. This is, however, offset by

the record of those who later proved their worth, and the value of the instruction they had received, by the mark they made in the world. Students could not be discouraged from coming and going throughout the school year. It was, in fact, going to take a good many years of the St. Peter period before that practice disappeared. Many attended the school for only a few weeks, and in an extreme case only three remained for the whole year. The largest attendance was found during January, February and March. The school year generally lasted from the first part of September until the middle of May, with a short Christmas vacation between the fall and spring terms.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. John J. Frodeen

During the first Carver years the prospect seemed bright to the modest expectations of the 'sixties. The enrollment rose to 68 during the first year, and for several years Carver led the Augustana school in Paxton in point of numbers. During 1864-65 the attendance was again 68, with as many as 60 in attendance at the same time. This was, however, the high water mark. From now on, students who went on to the Augustana Seminary in Paxton must present credentials of their standing in various subject. In 1865 Ole Paulson, a Swedish Norwegian who later became a Norwegian clergyman, served as assistant teacher for nine or ten weeks. In 1865-66 we first notice the name of "Mathes" Wahlstrom from West Union who was later to play such an important role in the history of the college. In 1866 we find that students were beginning to be employed as teachers of parochial summer schools, a practice that was to remain common for the next fifty years. The same year Mr. L. Anderson, a parochial teacher in East Union who had received his training in Sweden, was employed as assistant

teacher. He resigned after one year because, due to decreased attendance, the school could not support two teachers. In 1868-69 Ole Paulson, now an ordained man, capable of handling the Norwegian and English languages, was again secured. Thirteen of the 64 students enrolled were Norwegians. But it again seemed that St. Angar's could not support two teachers. Rev. Paulson resigned, and the Norwegian interest in the school departed with him. In 1869-70 we discover the earliest interest in pagan missions, hitherto obscured by the crying need of the home mission field. Matthew Wahlstrom, who at one time planned to become a missionary among the American Indians, although circumstances made him a college president, was a student at this time.

Jackson was getting tired of his arduous labor for an institution which in spite of all efforts, was hardly able to remain stationary. In 1869 he accepted the charge in West Union. Whatever teaching he did from now on, by the side of his regular ministry, was a sacrifice, due to the fact that there was none other to take his place. In 1870 Mr. J. J. Frodeen became teacher but Jackson put in about half time as instructor in Christianity and Swedish and remained the head of the school. Mr. Frodeen was re-elected, but spent the following year at Augustana, on a leave of absence, in order to be better prepared for his work. Temporary assistants took care of the teaching, and the attendance sank to 31, the lowest ebb in the history of the school. Jackson now felt too weak to continue the work and moved to the new parsonage in West Union. While Jackson's resignation was accepted, he still remained the nominal head of the institution and had charge of the religious instruction. Frodeen had now returned and was the principal teacher.

During the one year of 1873-74 Jackson was relieved of the principalship and all teaching. He still retained certain duties, being the president of the board of education. Frodeen was the principal, as well as the chief teacher. Rev. Jorlander and Mrs. Frodeen were assistant teachers. This year of financial panic was one of the best years at St. Ansgar's financially. The opening of the fall term was delayed one week, due to the fact that only two or three students showed up in the beginning. Another week was lost when Frodeen attended the important Conference meeting in St. Peter in whose deliberations he was very interested. New things were in the offing for the institution. He did not consider himself the right man for the new circumstances, and the board was forced to accept his resignation in 1874.

Jackson was again forced to step into the breach, but, owing to his

visit to Sweden, the fall term was not opened until October 20. Matthew Wahlstrom, now enrolled in the college department of Augustana College, was engaged to spend a year as teacher in his old school. A great part of the burden was thrown on his young shoulders, and he bore it so well that Jackson looked upon him as the man best fitted to guide the larger destinies of the institution in St. Peter. The school board held its last meeting on May 20, 1875. Its accounts were turned over to the newly elected board of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter.

But things were not in readiness in St. Peter, and it was decided to continue the work in East Union one more year if a teacher could be secured. Jackson consented to teach one more year while Rev. Linden served as vicar in his congregation. Mr. J. H. Randahl from Paxton, a former student, served as assistant teacher. The students numbered 43, one of whom was J. A. Krantz who was later to serve as the President of the Minnesota Conference. Of this final year Jackson has little but good to relate.

Of about seven hundred students, perhaps corresponding to about five hundred different individuals, who were enrolled in the school during its thirteen years in East Union, more than one half hailed from Carver county, and that county was well repaid, through a large number of better trained citizens, for the sometimes touching local interest displayed. Other localities, and even other states than Minnesota, as well as other nationalities than the Swedes, were represented from the first. The interest was never entirely local, even though it generally remained lukewarm outside of a small number of congregations, largely because many had always considered the location illchosen. While the education offered was not very advanced, students stepped out from school into a world which was none too well supplied with the trained leaders it craved. Several who had secured the first foundation in learning at St. Ansgar's continued in pursuit of higher education elsewhere. There must have been something about an institution which, besides furnishing a number of parochial and district school teachers and lay preachers, gave nearly a score of ministers to the church, and which could send out such future leaders as Dr. M. Wahlstrom, Governor John Lind, Professor John Udden, eminent among American geologists, Col. John Lundeen and Justice Andrew Holt who served for forty years as a Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Gustavus Adolphus College

A New Beginning in St. Peter

The outlook of St. Ansgar's Academy was not improving. In September 1872 the Minnesota Conference appointed a committee to consider the question of an endowment fund. The committee consisted of four pastors and one layman: Pastors Eric Norelius, J. O. Cavallin, J. G. Lagerstrom, and J. Magny, and Mr. H. Olson. At the Conference meeting in East Union, in February 1873 it submitted a memorable report. Now that Augustana College was going to be moved to Rock Island, the Conference should bear in mind that it might possibly develop into an independent synod and should consider whether it should join unreservedly in the drive to collect funds for the new building in Rock Island. If it put forth too great efforts in this venture, it would probably not have strength left to be able to support its own school as it should. The church would make a great mistake if it sought to educate only its ministers and left its laymen to seek their education elsewhere. One theological seminary might suffice for the whole Synod; but a college should be established in every important state. But an institution capable of imparting the elements of an up to date American education, such as was now demanded, must be located in a large cultural center. With such an example as that of Augsburg Seminary before it, the committee favored moving the school to Minneapolis and connecting it with the state university. The students were to receive their college education at the university; but they were to live at the Conference institution and receive their instruction in Christianity and Swedish there. St. Ansgar's lacked support because of widespread protest against its location. It was useless to seek an endowment fund until the question of the location of the school had been settled.

This plan appealed to the Conference, and Rev. C. A. Evald, Mr. August Johnson, and Mr. C. G. Vanstrom were appointed a committee to secure donations for the purpose in Minneapolis. The man who worked hardest to put the project across was Eric Norelius. He secured promises of donations of land from Pillsbury and other leading Minneapolis citizens. These offers were accepted by the Conference in May,

1873. A board of directors was chosen, and it was decided to incorporate the institution under the name of the Gustavus Adolphus Literary and Theological Institute. But the financial panic of 1873 intervened and the hoped-for donations did not materialize. When the Conference gathered in St. Peter, October 1 to 6, it was decided, after a lengthy discussion, to postpone the question of moving the school.

The matter was, however, immediately reconsidered. A few men in and around St. Peter had been considering the possibility of securing the school. The prime mover was Andrew Thorson, one of the earliest settlers at Scandian Grove. He was now register of deeds of Nicollet county. A committee of St. Peter men, including Thorson and four others, appeared before the Conference and wanted to know on what terms, if any, St. Peter might secure the institution, seeing that Minneapolis was not able to meet the conditions, due to the hard times. The question was thus reopened.

The Conference thought that the favored locality ought to furnish a campus and ten thousand dollars for the building fund. A new committee, including two St. Peter men, was chosen to consider offers from such localities as desired to bid for the location of the school.

St. Peter was the only place which responded; and its offer was accepted when the Conference met in Minneapolis in February 1874. A donation of ten acres of land and ten thousand dollars was pledged. In May 1874 the Charter of Gustavus Adolphus College was signed by the ministers of the Conference who thus became the first Board of Education.

Of the ten thousand dollars pledged by St. Peter, about one half was subscribed by the Swedish Lutherans of St. Peter and Scandian Grove. Much more was needed for the erection of a building, conceived along ambitious lines, which cost more than twenty-five thousand dollars when completed. Rev. J. G. Lagerstrom of St. Peter became the first solicitor as well as the chairman of the building committee.

The grasshoppers destroyed a large part of the crops in 1875 and 1876. The money for the college was exasperatingly slow in coming in, and a special effort had to be made years later, in order to secure the fulfillment of the pledges. Mr. John Peterson, who was one of the most ardent workers, the supervisor of the construction of the building, and later a treasurer of the college, induced the Swedes in St. Peter to double their subscriptions. Scandian Grove, with less than two hundred communicants, raised four thousand dollars more, under the influence

of Andrew Thorson and Andrew Nelson. The latter was a board member since 1872 and the first college treasurer in St. Peter. Rev. Lagerstrom gathered more than two thousand dollars in Spring Garden before he resigned as solicitor. The effort to collect money through local district agents did not work well. In 1875 Rev. Magny, the first student of the school, became solicitor. He spent a large part of the next three years in this work, donating a considerable portion of his salary. But people were not used to giving large amounts. Objections were raised that the time was inconvenient and that the new location was not the right one. Through the efforts of Magny and others, however, upwards of ten thousand dollars was raised. There were times when the contractor was on the point of abandoning work on the unfinished building because funds were not forthcoming. It was, however, found possible to borrow enough money, largely at ten per cent interest, to finish the work. By that time the debt amounted to almost one half of the value of the property.

The campus on College Hill consisted of twenty acres, ten of which had been donated, with ten adjoining acres purchased from Mr. A. A. Stone for \$447. The hill was sandy and bare, without a tree. The approach up the hill from town did not, as now, consist of a graded street. It took a fairly good climber to negotiate it. Teams and wagons had to circle around and approach the college from the prairie side.

In the fall of 1874 two hundred and fifty cords of Kasota stone were made ready for the mason's hands. The plans were prepared by Rev. L. A. Hocanzon and Architect P. Bassford. In the spring of 1875 the work began in earnest; and in June the chief contract was awarded to Mr. O. N. Ostrom, a St. Peter contractor. On August 12 the cornerstone was laid. Before winter the building was inclosed. The completion of the work took a year longer than expected, mostly due to financial difficulties. The building was looked upon as a "noble" structure, the pride of the town. There was perhaps not a building equal to it among the church properties of the Augustana Synod. Critics maintained that it was far too large, even if it was going to house both the students and the professors, with their families. Some doubtless imagined that it would be sufficient for all time.

Rev. Norelius declined two or three offers to assume the presidency, and Rev. Andrew Jackson and others declined calls to teach. Was the opening of the work to be delayed another year for lack of teachers? Rather than allow this to happen, Rev. J. P. Nyquist agreed



PHOTO COURTESY GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

Old Main in 1877.

to serve as Principal. (He had served as pastor in Chicago for several years.) He looked upon himself as only a temporary leader but really remained five years. He was going to conduct classes in Swedish, with Mr. Charles Holmberg temporarily engaged to teach classes in English.

The first school day dawned on October 16, 1876. Not a lecture room was yet in order, but six or eight students gathered about the dining room table for religious exercises. There had been a delay in the delivery of furnishings ordered, and diverse articles of furniture were borrowed. The borrowed kitchen stove was still in use at the end of the school year. Rev. Lagerstrom was seen indefatigably climbing the hill with one necessary article after the other. Books were placed along the windows; and here the students were at first forced to kneel while practicing penmanship. But matters progressed so well that it was decided to dedicate the building on Reformation Day, October 31, 1876.

It was one of those ideally beautiful autumn days. The city was keenly interested, and country teams arrived in large numbers. A special train arrived in the morning. Swedish and American flags were in evidence; and the mayor of St. Peter joined in the parade.

A temporary platform had been erected in one of the three lecture rooms on the main floor. The greater part of the crowd was unable to hear the program, which consisted of speeches, choral singing, and the dedication. Norelius, Sjöblom, Auslund, and others took part. The program was, of course, mostly in Swedish. It was good except for the common fault of being too lengthy. A jovial spirit animated the visitors as they gathered around the refreshments in the basement after the program. Thus school life was inaugurated in what was then referred to as *the* school building. When other buildings were added, it became the Main school building. In 1905, when the Auditorium was erected, it became the "Old Main."

Life went on according to rules. Students took turns in serving as "custos" one week at a time. The "custos" had charge of the little school bell and gave the call for rising, morning devotion, and recitations. He was also to carry and deliver the mail and run errands. As there was no free delivery of mail or merchandise, the students had to bring groceries and all other supplies from the town. Students cared for their own rooms and performed the necessary janitor work. They had to saw and split enough wood for the kitchen and heating stoves, keep fires going and take turns in caring for the classrooms. Other kinds of gymnastics were only talked about. The building was intended to furnish homes for teachers, even married ones, as well as for male students.

The students rose at 5:30 and ate breakfast about seven o'clock. At 8:45, or earlier, they met for morning devotions, conducted alternately in English and Swedish by the teachers. Recitations continued from 9 to 12 and from 1 or 2 to 4 or 4:30 except on Saturdays and Sundays. On these days the religious exercises were conducted by the students in turn at the breakfast table. The same practice was followed on Saturday evenings.

A majority of the students were natives of Sweden. The Swedish language was spoken more often, and more fluently, than English, and shared equal honor in instruction.

These early students differed from their modern successors in outward polish, as well as in other matters. In age some were over thirty, others were only twelve; and the average age was hardly above twenty. The majority lived and boarded at the school. Board, room, and fuel cost two dollars a week at first, later \$1.75. In later years prices gradually rose. Tuition was twenty dollars for the whole year.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Faculty and Student Body at Gustavus Adolphus College, 1877.

Several "preacher candidates" received board gratis, or nearly so, but had to care for the livestock, i.e., the kine and swine and poultry, in return. In later years a "college horse" was added. A part of the campus constituted the "college farm" where corn, oats, potatoes, and vegetables were raised. Another part of the campus was sown to grass. Students and others worked heroically to beautify the grounds. Thou-

sands of box elders, maples, cottonwood and other trees were soon planted.

The intention was to make Gustavus Adolphus a college in fact as well as in name, as soon as circumstances permitted. But there was no noticeable improvement, as compared with St. Ansgar's Academy, during the first year. There were only fifty-one students; and the two teachers were not able to introduce much of a system. The handful who had attended the school in Carver were simply put into the second class to begin with, the rest into the first class.

Later, with two teachers and three classes, the classes could not be completely separated. But there was a gradual improvement, with three distinct academy classes, and some "preparatory" students besides. In theory, there were supposed to be three separate courses: the preparatory which prepared for entrance to Augustana College; the high school course which continued from November until March; and a normal course of four years. The year thus came to include three, and even four terms, but, in reality, students came and went irregularly, and their courses were irregular as well.

Professor A. W. Williamson, the first A. M. on the faculty, a war veteran and an experienced instructor, was engaged as a teacher from 1877 until 1880. (He was a son of the Indian missionary, Thomas Smith Williamson, who began the *Lac qui Parle* mission in 1835.) He was known for his ability, as well as for his mannerisms, and filled his role in a very capable manner. He worked gladly, for a very small salary, with the same unselfish Christian character which characterized him through life. President Nyquist seems to have had some misgivings, however, even though he could not find fault with him, because Williamson was neither Swedish nor (as yet) Lutheran. There was, consequently, no religious instruction for those who did not understand Swedish, as that task could not be entrusted to this son of a Presbyterian missionary. When Gustavus allowed Williamson to go, Augustana, more tolerant, claimed him, and gained thereby. He continued to remember Gustavus by donations of books, etc., and, finally, in his last testament.

Opportunities for reading were limited. About one hundred volumes were brought from St. Ansgar's. Rev. Jorlander's library was purchased by the Conference, and other gifts were added. The library thus came to include about five hundred volumes. Some curiosities from Carver and a collection of stuffed animals, donated by A. Edholm

of Lake City, formed the nucleus of a museum. The first annual college catalog was issued in 1878, printed on the initiative of the faculty.

The attendance rose to an even 100 in 1879-80; and the next year it reached 116. Rev. M. Wahlstrom was now again connected with the institution. When Nyquist resigned, he became the acting head of the institution and was soon elected President by the Conference.

Nyquist resigned with the object in mind of founding a ladies' seminary which would obviate the necessity of accepting girl students at Gustavus. He did not, however, find enough support for this project to enable him to put it into effect, and Gustavus remained co-educational.

Vasa Children's Home

Eric Norelius, founder of the Conference school and pioneer in a number of other ventures, was also the originator of the institutional charity work in the Conference. Through his interest and his personal efforts the Vasa Children's Home was established in 1865, the first institution of its kind in the Augustana Synod.

There are two main sources that tell the story of the beginning of the Vasa Home, and they contradict each other in respect to one detail. In the Minnesota Conference Minutes for January 25 to 28, 1866, there is an account of how the children's home began. In this account Norelius stated that he had brought two children from St. Paul to Red Wing and then to Vasa, where they were housed in the church basement at first. The other source is "Vasa Illustrata," the history of Vasa written by Norelius in 1905. There he says he brought four children from St. Paul, all from the same family.

Though we are unable now to settle the question whether there were two or four children, the fact is that this was the beginning of charity work in the Conference. The exact date is not given, but it was in the fall of 1865.

Norelius was on a visit in St. Paul and was there informed by a Mr. Johanson (evidently Johan Johanson, a leader in the First Lutheran Church of St. Paul) that an immigrant family, Mikola Erik Erikson, had recently arrived from Sweden, and that shortly after their arrival both parents had died, leaving the children destitute and helpless. (An article about the Vasa Home by Aron Edstrom in *Prärieblomman* 1903 states that the family were Baptists. This point is not mentioned by Norelius.)

Faced with this dire case which needed immediate attention Norelius decided to take the children along with him to his home in Red Wing, where he was living at that time. The following Sunday he took them along to the church service, which was held in the court house, because a new church was being built. He told the congregation about the orphans he had brought with him home, and mentioned that they

needed both food, clothing, and care. The congregation responded immediately with an offering for this purpose.

The next step was to find a place for them and someone to care for them. A place was found in the basement of the Vasa church, and Norelius secured the services of a good woman to care for them. She was Mrs. Brita Nilson, generally known as "Moster Brita" (Aunt Brita). She lived at Stockholm, Wisconsin, and came in response to the urgent plea of Norelius.

"Moster Brita" loved children. She had lived through some sad experiences in childhood and knew what it meant for a child to be without love. In an article written by J. Fremling and published in *Korsbaneret* 1891 her story is told: When Brita was but a young child, her home burned, and the family was left in very poor circumstances. Brita, though only eight years old, was sent to some distant relatives where she was put to work herding the cattle. One of the daughters in the home mistreated her brutally. Brita came home with the cattle from the pasture a little too early one evening and the older girl, Johanna, met her and pushed her into a stone pile so hard that she could hardly get up again. Another time Johanna told Brita that she had to herd the cattle farther out from home. She went so far that she lost her way and stayed out all through a very stormy night with the cattle, walking barefoot through the woods. She was found early the next morning. Again and again Johanna gave her duties too hard for her, and one time when Brita had fallen into a swamp under a heavy burden Johanna came and pushed her further down into the mud. Often she had to go about her work or go to bed with clothes wet from such experiences. For two and a half years her parents did not know what their little girl had to endure, because when Brita on one occasion was permitted to visit her home Johanna went with her and she dared not tell her parents how she had it. On a second visit she told her sister, and the parents learned of her misery. When they confronted Johanna's parents about these matters, they claimed to know nothing of what had taken place, and soon Johanna was made to confess and to ask Brita's forgiveness.

In 1854 Brita went to America. She lived in Moline, Illinois nine years. Here she came into contact with Rev. O. C. T. Andren and other pastors, and upon hearing a discussion on "The Prodigal Son" she came to clarity in regard to her own relation to Christ. Her desire to serve Him was awakened and she thought she might be able to teach



PHOTO FROM VASA ILLUSTRATA, COURTESY VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Vasa Children's Home, First Building, Erected 1869.

young children. Just at the time she was thinking of these matters she received a letter from Stockholm, Wisconsin asking her to come and serve as teacher of the children there. She heeded this call, and her work as teacher became a very pleasant duty.

When Norelius, in the fall of 1865, suddenly was faced with the proposition of caring for several young orphan children, it was Brita who came to mind as the logical one. Since she had enjoyed her work and the people in Stockholm wanted her to stay, it was no easy matter to decide. But she felt that the Lord was directing her to the new task of caring for the orphans at Vasa, and she became the first matron of the Vasa Children's Home.

When Norelius reported to the Conference about it, he did not ask the Conference to assume responsibility for the new institution, financially or otherwise. He said: "With no previous plans having been made, this little institution has come into existence, and the Lord has shown His favor, as far as we can see. What shall we do with this matter? Perhaps we should break up the institution, send the children here or there in the world and let the matron go wherever she wants to? Or perhaps we should send the children to some orphan home farther down the country? The former we cannot do for that would be to act contrary to God's Word and our conscience; and we have had no indication that we ought to do the latter. And I believe that neither is necessary, for it seems that our congregations in Minnesota are willing and able to help support a few homeless children.

"It also seems that we may soon expect some others who are in

need of care, and then it would be well to have a home for them. May the Lord do according to His own grace and wisdom. I have wanted to present this simple account of the matter to the Conference, not to bring about any legislation in regard to it, but only to hear its opinion with regard to this subject, and to give me an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions that have been received for the homeless children."

The Conference adopted two brief resolutions, accepting this new activity as an indication of divine guidance, and requesting Norelius to continue his work, also recommending that the congregations contribute to the support of this work.

For eleven years it continued to be a private institution under direct supervision of Norelius. Informal reports were sometimes given to the Conference, and the congregations were urged to continue their support.

Although Norelius stated to the Conference in 1867 that the Lord had wonderfully supported the institution, there were days when the children went to bed without knowing where the next day's food was to come from. Moster Brita was a woman of prayer and when the flour bin was empty one day in the middle of winter she told the children to pray with all their might, or else they would have to go out and beg. The children prayed and sang many times during the day, but they had to go to bed without seeing their prayers answered. About eleven o'clock in the evening, while Brita sat there alone mending clothes there was a knock at the door. A man called out "Open the door and you will get a sack of flour. I am thinking you need some flour." In the morning, when the children saw the bin full of flour they were convinced that God Himself had brought it.

The number of children gradually increased and it was found necessary to provide more room. Norelius purchased a ten acre tract in 1867 near the Vasa Church for \$150 and there a house was built, a small, plain board shack. Moster Brita found that her health was failing, and after four years of service as matron she resigned in 1869.

Norelius succeeded in getting another capable woman, Miss Caroline Magny of Chisago Lake. The children at the home now numbered nine, and it was found necessary to build larger quarters.

In 1876 the Vasa Children's Home was taken over by the Conference as its first charity institution, and a new building was erected in 1877. Miss Magny, who had now married Mr. N. J. Strandberg, con-



PHOTO FROM VASA ILLUSTRATA, COURTESY VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Miss Caroline Magny, Second Matron of Vasa Children's Home,
with the Children about 1870.*

tinued as the matron for a few years, and was there when a terrible calamity in the form of a tornado destroyed the building and brought death to five of the children. This was in the night between the 2nd and 3rd of July, 1879. Shortly before midnight the storm struck the Vasa community. When Norelius was on his way to the Home to see how they had fared in the storm, he met the little flock, nearly all of them bruised and bleeding. In the ruins of the building he found three children dead. Two of the injured died later. But next to a chimney, under a portion of the roof which had fallen down two little infants lay in their cradle, unharmed. One of these was the little daughter of the Strandberg's.

Within a few days work was commenced on a new building, and as the news of the disaster spread among the congregations of the Conference, contributions poured in that not only enabled them to build the new home but also to pay all the old debts of the institution.

The Strandberg's now left the Home and Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Hultgren took charge in 1880. The institution continued to expand, and through the years has provided a Christian home for hundreds of homeless children.

Constitution and Order

When the Minnesota Conference was organized a constitution was adopted. Where did it come from?

Eric Norelius had carried it in his baggage on that memorable journey from Red Wing by steamboat, stage, oxcart, rowboat, and afoot.

Where did he get it? We have no definite answer to that question. Norelius as well as the other Minnesota pastors had belonged to the Mississippi Conference of the Northern Illinois Synod until they organized their own Conference. But in the minutes of the Mississippi Conference no constitution appears, so Norelius could not have copied it from there. It seems likely that he wrote it himself, which he undoubtedly was capable of doing, though he was at that time less than twenty-five years old.

The constitution stipulated that at least three conference meetings should be held each year. This rule was adhered to during the first twenty years of the history of the Conference, with the exception of 1862 when only two meetings were held.

At each meeting new officers were elected, consisting of president, secretary, and treasurer. The treasury was in charge of Ola Paulson until February, 1860, after which Johan Johanson of St. Paul held the office for a number of years. The Conference president and secretary were never reelected until in the 'seventies when Norelius held the office of president three years in succession, before he became synodical president in 1874.

The Conference president had no duties or responsibilities between sessions, except to decide, together with the local pastor, who should preach at the next Conference meeting. The Conference secretary had the duty of reporting annually to the Synod regarding the more important happenings in the Conference.

The Conference meetings were considered to be mainly for the purpose of preaching and theological discussions. The business of the convention consisted mainly of reports, some oral and some written, on the conditions in the parishes and fields served by the respective pastors. This was always followed by a discussion of how to supply vacant

congregations with pastoral service, and how to reach the new settlements. Since there were no committees to prepare the business procedure beforehand, decisions had to be made after full discussion by all the pastors and delegates. As the work grew and developed it was found that this was cumbersome and took up too much time.

In February 1861 a proposed new constitution was presented by Norelius and was adopted by the Conference, subject to the approval of the Synod. But before it was presented to the Synod an amendment was made which indicates a step in the direction of more authority for the Conference president. At the May meeting of the Conference a committee was appointed at the beginning of the first session to arrange a program of procedure for the meeting. The committee consisted of Eric Norelius and A. Jacobson. Their report included more than was called for in the instructions given them. They proposed as an amendment to the new constitution a provision that the Conference president should have the duty of seeing that decisions of the Conference are put into effect, and that he should at each Conference meeting present a report on the conditions existing in the churches, their needs, etc., and thereby bring to the attention of the Conference matters that should be considered. This suggestion was adopted by the Conference.

The proposed constitution was not only approved by the Synod but it was recommended to all the other conferences. However, this constitution was not printed either in the Conference or the synodical minutes, but apparently this did not matter for the next ten years.

The adoption of new rules seems to have made little difference in the actual management of Conference business. No President's report appeared in the minutes of the Conference the first twenty years. Following the opening service the convention would begin with the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, after which a committee would be appointed to list the matters of unfinished business. Usually these were expressed in the form of questions which the Conference must answer. Other special committees would be appointed from time to time as the need might arise.

In 1863 a regular order of business was adopted. About this time the Conference had acquired a school which from then on was the subject of much discussion and many resolutions at the Conference meetings. Reports were received from the school board, from the president of the school, from the treasurer, and from the Education Committee.

The first standing committee established by the Conference was a home mission committee elected in June 1866. Prior to that time, home mission committees had been elected at various times for specific duties. In January 1865 a committee consisting of Norelius, Jackson, and Hedengran was elected to see if they could secure a travelling missionary. At the June meeting this committee reported that attempts had been made to find a man for the position, but without success. The Conference then made this special committee a standing home mission committee, authorized to do whatever they could to meet the needs of the home mission fields. An appeal was made to the congregations to organize mission societies which might give free will contributions to home and foreign missions. (The first society of this sort was organized in Vasa on July 4.)

Although the home mission committee did not report at every session of the Conference it seems to have been in existence until 1870. That year the Synod adopted a new plan for home missions, placing all the work under a Central Board. Each Conference was to elect a committee consisting of the Conference president and four others, to work in its respective area under the guidance of the Central Board. The Minnesota Committee consisted of Pastors P. Sjöblom and P. Carlson, and Mr. H. Olson of Red Wing and Mr. A. Johnson of Vasa, together with the president, Norelius.

The very next year the Minnesota Conference asked to be released from this set-up, that they might take charge of the home mission work in their area. The Conference even presented the question as to whether it would not be best to divide the Synod and organize a new one in Minnesota. The second part of this request was not granted, but the Minnesota Conference was given authority to take complete charge of the home mission work within its own boundaries.

About this time the Conference discovered that its constitution was lost and they didn't know where to find it. The discovery came about in this way: In May 1871 the Conference elected a committee consisting of Pastors Norelius, Cavallin, and Sjöblom and Mr. Jens Olson of Vasa to study the question of how the Conference could be freed from some of the many details of business that took up the time at Conference meetings, in order that the delegation might have more opportunity for consideration of theological and religious topics. In September of the same year this committee reported that it had come to the conclusion that something else was needed than merely a set of

rules of order. The constitution which was adopted in 1861 and approved by the Synod was nowhere to be found. It had disappeared, and no copy had been made of it. Therefore the committee had now taken upon itself the duty of formulating a new constitution, which was presented to the Conference for its consideration. Action was postponed until the next meeting, in December 1871. At that time the proposed constitution was adopted. This provided for election of Conference officers annually instead of at every Conference meeting. But perhaps the most significant change was the establishment of an executive committee, to consist of two pastors and two laymen, and the Conference president to serve *ex officio*.

The duties of the executive committee were defined as follows: a) to attend to routine business of the Conference; b) to be informed concerning the vacant congregations and mission fields in the Conference and arrange for preaching services there, and also to appoint traveling missionaries, determine their salaries and report to the Conference which may make such changes as it may desire; to summarize the reports of the religious conditions on the various mission fields and present same to the Conference, together with proposed resolutions with regard to it; c) to receive all documents which the Conference may turn over to it, arrange the matters which are to come before the Conference and prepare resolutions regarding them.

After this new constitution had been adopted the old Home Mission Committee was dissolved and its affairs turned over to the Executive Committee. The first Executive Committee elected on December 9, 1871, consisted of Rev. P. Sjöblom, Red Wing; Rev. J. O. Cavalin, Spring Garden; Mr. J. P. Gustafson, Spring Garden; and Mr. T. G. Pearson, Vasa. Eric Norelius was Conference president. Thus the entire committee was from the one district, Goodhue.

It was a move for greater efficiency, and the home mission work in the succeeding years shows evidence of being established with greater unity and definite plan.

Finances and Stewardship

Today the Minnesota Conference, including all its institutions and local church property, has a total valuation of more than ten million dollars. It has grown from small beginnings. Ninety years ago, the first offering for the Conference treasury brought in a total of \$5.09, given on Sunday forenoon, October 10, 1858 at Chisago Lake, where a very large number of people were in attendance. Added to this was the sum of thirty-eight cents received as an offering at the Red Wing meeting in July 1858. The first expense item reported was the printing of the constitution in booklet form. This cost forty-seven cents.

The first collections for the home mission work of the Conference were: Red Wing, \$5.00; East Union, \$6.46; West Union, \$1.58; Cannon Falls (Cannon River?) \$2.51; Spring Garden, \$1.66. With \$17.21 in the mission treasury and \$5.00 in the regular treasury in February 1859 the Conference treasurer, Ola Paulson, was authorized to lend the money at legal rate and at his own risk. He managed remarkably well. From the regular treasury he made a loan of \$7.10 and in four months earned eighty-five cents interest. From the mission treasury he made a loan of \$17.21 and in four months earned \$2.06 interest. These interest rates were approximately thirty-six per cent per annum. After purchasing a secretary book for eighty cents, the Conference treasury showed a balance of \$7.75, and the mission treasury had increased to \$23.56. Collections for the Conference treasury in 1859 were: February at East Union, \$7.61; June at Scandian Grove, \$3.73; August at Cannon Falls, \$2.24. The following year, in February 1860, Chisago Lake stepped up to \$8.95. But a few years later some of the Chisago Lake people discovered a convenient way of disposing of wildcat money. In January 1867 at a Conference meeting in that church an offering of \$15.11 was given to the Conference treasury. However, the treasurer's report shows this expense item: "Worthless money in the collection from Chisago Lake . . . \$.55."

Reports on financial contributions are incomplete for the first years. The first statistics of the Augustana Synod (1860) contain reports from only twelve Minnesota Conference congregations. Total for the

general work of the Church from these twelve was \$86.73, and for local purposes \$1,614.00. Fifteen years later (1875) the contributions of the Minnesota Conference were \$5,936.28 for the general work and \$33,717.00 for local purposes. The per capita for the general work was \$.565, and for the local \$3.21. These figures do not seem impressive when compared with the statistics of the present time. But it is almost certain that the contributions of the pioneer churches represented a more real sacrifice than the giving of most congregations today. Money was extremely scarce in pioneer times. It was not only that the early settlers were living in new surroundings, farming new land, and had little to sell. Even if they had something to sell, prices were generally low, and they often had to accept goods instead of cash. The banks in Minnesota as well as elsewhere in the country were on a rather unsteady foundation. The panic of 1857 drained the money out of Minnesota and the hard times persisted for several years. After the Civil War conditions improved for a time, but the panic of 1873 and the grasshopper devastations five years in succession reduced many to poverty and hardship.

Home mission efforts began hopefully in the Conference in 1858, but financial resources for the program were very meager. The beginnings of Gustavus Adolphus College, in the fall of 1862, came at the time when Minnesota was extremely hard hit by the Civil War and the Sioux uprising. When the school was moved to St. Peter in 1875 Minnesota was just beginning to emerge from the panic of 1873 and was in the midst of the grasshopper scourge. The Vasa Children's Home, begun as a private institution in 1865 was taken over by the Conference in 1876, at the same time that it was struggling to pay for the college building. Not one pioneer venture of the Conference had an auspicious financial beginning. Launching out in faith that God would prosper their undertakings, the pioneers built churches and institutions for the furtherance of God's kingdom. Through many and various vicissitudes the work has grown and developed. The growth indicates not only an increase in the dollar valuation of church property, but also a furtherance of the general awareness of and interest in the cause of missions, Christian charity and Christian education.

Church buildings in the pioneer communities were usually erected at very small expense. The first church at Spring Garden cost \$2.50 in cash. This is probably the low record, but many of the original churches in new settlements cost less than \$100 in cash. Even so we

find again and again that individual congregations were given the privilege of asking for collections throughout the Synod to aid them in financing their church buildings. No congregation is mentioned more often than First Church, St. Paul. A lot was purchased in 1861 for \$525, and most of this money was raised in the congregation and among the people of the city. The Conference, recognizing the need of having a church in the state capital, voted to take a general subscription among the members of the Conference. This was in February 1861. In May a similar resolution was adopted. In June the Synod recommended that all congregations lift offerings for St. Paul. In February 1862 the Conference appropriated all the money in its treasury and all receipts up to April 1 to the church building in St. Paul. (The reports do not show what the amount was.) In 1863 a subscription for the St. Paul church totalled \$82.00. The following year the Conference asked Norelius to go east to solicit funds for the same purpose, and the Synod added its recommendation to this, but Dr. Passavant reported that the times were not favorable and there is no evidence that the journey ever was made. In 1864 it was reported that \$110.00 had been subscribed in the Conference, and some of it paid. In 1866 the whole matter of getting a church built in St. Paul was laid in the lap of the home mission committee. Although the Synod again had urged all congregations to lift offerings as soon as possible, the results were disappointing. In January 1867 Cederstam was asked to spend some time in St. Paul, to see if he could get the project started. At the September meeting of the Conference he was at last able to report that the work of building a church in St. Paul was under way. Though other matters than financial problems were largely to blame for the long delay, it is interesting to note the various ineffectual appeals by Conference and Synod. It was difficult for most people to see why they should help to build a church in St. Paul as well as to support their own.

Pastors' salaries were not high. As a student Norelius served Chisago Lake three months in 1854 and received \$25.00 in cash. Cederstam had no definite promise of salary the first two years, but in 1857 the salary was set at \$1.00 per communicant for six months. There were about 200 communicants. When Hedengran was called in 1859 his salary was \$200 in cash, free house and free use of twenty-nine acres of land, and two bushels of grain from each farmer. In 1866 it was changed to \$550 cash salary. When he retired in 1873 the congre-

gation voted him an annual pension of \$300 for life. When Norelius came to Red Wing and Vasa in 1856 his salary was set at \$200 from each congregation. He did not always receive the full amount. When Cambridge called A. Engdahl in 1871 the salary offered was \$400. When Mooers Prairie called Rev. Lagerstrom in 1869 the salary was set at two dollars per communicant and two bushels of wheat per farmer. In 1873 when Aaron Wahlin was called to the congregations in Douglas county, Norunga offered \$150 in cash, two collections each year, and also supplied him with a horse and urged each family to donate a sack of oats for the horse. At a later meeting some members were reprimanded in no uncertain terms for having become lax in this matter. Augustana, Minneapolis, paid Rev. Evald a salary of \$500 in 1873. First Church, St. Paul, with 246 communicant members in 1875, increased their pastor's salary to \$800. East and West Sveadahl called N. J. Brink in 1873 for \$350 and no house. Two years later they called Jonas Alm. There were then four churches in the parish, and the total salary offered was \$560. When Red Wing called Sjöblom in 1868 the salary was \$800. According to available records it seems that no pastor in the Conference had a salary as high as \$1,000 prior to 1875. The average salary in the early 'seventies was probably about \$500.

Travelling missionaries had very uncertain prospects as to when and how they would receive their salaries. In the fall of 1861, when Norelius had completed his year of service as missionary, \$117.24 of his \$400 salary remained unpaid. The entire Conference treasury, \$74.87, was remitted to him, and an appeal was made to the Synod to pay the balance. In 1863 the Synod's Home Mission Committee paid him \$25.00. In 1865 the Committee reported having paid \$25.00 to "one of the pastors working in Minnesota." Perhaps this was the final—long overdue—payment to Norelius. When Cederstam was called as home missionary in 1870, he was to have a salary of \$600, but at the end of the first year he had received only \$492. Again in December 1871 the Conference had to face the fact that some of the travelling missionaries had not received their salaries in full.

Almost every pioneer congregation assessed the members a fixed rate for "dues." In some it was as low as one dollar per communicant for the year. Usually, however, the rate was twice as much for men as for women. In many rural churches grain, wood, or other products

were accepted in payment. East Union was probably the first congregation to try a free will system of giving. At first a dues system was in effect, but in 1861 it was decided that members should give of their own free will. This was Peter Carlson's own idealistic plan, and he accepted what little he got, without asking for more. It seemed that the time was not yet ripe for such advanced methods of stewardship, and Hasselquist, the synodical president, told Carlson it was poor training for the congregation. A few years later they were on the per communicant basis again.

There was, of course, free will giving in all congregations for missions and charities. Though the Synod had no foreign missions of its own, the friends of missions gave to other Lutheran fields, and even to some of the mission societies in Sweden. The first recorded contributions for foreign missions from the Minnesota Conference are \$20.00 from Red Wing and \$7.19 from Chisago Lake in 1862.

In 1862 a gratifying response was made to appeals for aid to the victims of the Sioux massacre. Gifts came from Lutherans in various states even before the Conference had a special committee to handle the matter. In October 1862 Norelius, Jackson and Johan Johanson were elected to serve as a relief committee. They reported in June 1863 that gifts totalled \$743.70 and that \$555.45 had been paid out, leaving a balance of \$188.85. Between sixty and seventy families had received aid. The committee continued to function until June 1864 and the balance then on hand was designated to be used for a children's home which the Conference would some day establish. This was more than a year before Norelius began the work which developed into the Vasa Children's Home.

In trying to evaluate the stewardship of the pioneer churches, we must consider two facts: First, that the people were immigrants from a land which had a state church and they were not accustomed to the idea of supporting the church entirely by voluntary gifts; second, that the pioneers were generally poor and had little to give. If they earned a few dollars, there were a hundred ways to use the money. They needed clothes, kitchen utensils, tools, a team of horses, a reaper, a better roof. Who would not count such things among the necessities? Yet many a pioneer family postponed the purchase of such articles because they considered the church as a greater necessity. The statistics for the early years do not look impressive but if we knew some of the

stories of individual sacrifices, we should more fully appreciate the deeds of those immigrant people who planted their church in the new homeland.

A beautiful example of a gift of love to the church is recorded in the history of the Chisago Lake Church. During the Civil War several men from this congregation were serving in the same regiment. Thinking of their church back home they decided to buy a silver communion chalice and paten. These articles were obtained and sent home as a gift from the boys in blue.

Publications

The Minnesota Conference has never had a publication establishment. It never had an official publication until 1943. But it has at various times given its moral support to private publications, which have served as the unofficial organs of the Conference.

Before the Conference was organized Eric Norelius began the publication of *Minnesota Posten* in Red Wing. The first number came out in November, 1857. It was published twice a month, and contained political and other news of general interest, articles on agriculture, science, etc. There were religious articles and church news. In this paper the preliminary convention at Red Wing was reported, and the official notice of a meeting to organize the Minnesota Conference was published. In the last issue of *Minnesota Posten* the minutes of the organization meeting were printed in full, and also an illuminating account of Norelius' impressions on the journey to the Conference meeting.

After a year's existence Norelius' paper was consolidated with *Hemlandet* in Chicago and he was called to serve as editor. He held this position only nine months. *Posten* was never revived.

In 1869 Norelius started another publication, which was named *Missionären* (The Missionary). It served the entire Synod as a medium for publication of missionary articles and news items, both foreign and home. The paper was a monthly, six by nine inches, sixteen pages. Many reports of travelling home missionaries in the Augustana Synod were published in this paper. Many of these reports are found nowhere else, and therefore this little magazine is very valuable in the study of the home mission history of this period in the Synod.

In 1871 the Minnesota Conference presented a petition to the Synod asking that it be allowed to take over *Missionären* from the Publication Society. Since the Society was not a synodical organization, the Synod could only refer the petition to the Society. The result was a change of editors, but the publication was not transferred to the Minnesota Conference. Norelius had asked to be relieved of the editorial duties, and Pastors J. P. Nyquist and A. Hult were persuaded to take

over the responsibility. At the end of 1873 it was merged with the official synodical paper, *Augustana*.

Norelius was soon ready to begin another publication. In December 1877 appeared the first number of *Evangelisk Luthersk Tidskrift*, with Norelius as editor. It was similar to *Missionären*, but was more specifically intended to serve the Minnesota Conference. A year later it was changed to *Skaffaren*, a weekly paper which carried general news as well as church news and religious articles. This paper had a rival, *Minnesota Stats Tidning*, established 1877 by Hans Mattson and others as a purely secular paper. In 1882 *Skaffaren* bought *Stats Tidning*, and the publication served for more than half a century as the semi-official organ of the Conference. It had a large circulation in Minnesota and other states as long as the Swedish language was used by the immigrants and their children.

In addition to his various ventures in the church paper business, Norelius wrote several booklets, the first one being a collection of fifteen religious songs, published in 1859. He afterwards admitted that they had no literary merit. In 1865 his handbook for Sunday schools was published (Chapter 46). In 1869 he wrote a 64-page booklet entitled "Ev. Lutherska Augustana Synoden i Nord Amerika och dess mission" (The Ev. Lutheran Augustana Synod in North America and its mission). The Conference recommended and urged that it be published, particularly as a means of supplying information about the Synod to immigrants and to prospective immigrants. It was published in Sweden in 1870. It contains a summary of Lutheran doctrine, a short history of the Augustana Synod, an explanation of the Synod's polity, and a statement of what the Synod considered to be its mission and purpose. Undoubtedly it helped to give many Swedish immigrants a favorable introduction to the Synod.

Congregational Life and Activity

In the study of American life, whether it be church life or any other phase of our history, there has been a tendency to idealize, even to idolize, the pioneer period. We like to dwell on the heroic aspects, the winning of the West, conquering the wilderness, plowing or building where none had plowed or built before. The changes wrought in one person's lifetime were truly remarkable. Cities and farms flourished where there was nothing but trees or prairie grass when the settlers came. Railroads and highways brought communities into touch with the outside world. Man, it seemed, had accomplished a miracle.

But the story of what man did to the land, marvelous though that story be, is not the most important part of our pioneer history. The conquest of the wilderness is that which is most evident to the human eye and mind. But more significant is the question, What happened to the souls of the pioneers and their children while the land was being conquered? When we study the great epic of what man did to the land, let us not forget to see, if we can, what the land did to man. That is a far more subtle and difficult question. We can not hope to answer it fully here. In the present volume we are attempting to cover a period of only a fourth of a century in the pioneer history of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference. That is less than a generation, too short a period for such a study as we have suggested. Perhaps we can make a beginning.

Consciously or unconsciously we compare the pioneers with ourselves and our own generation. We have seen how they established congregations, and made a beginning of higher Christian education and institutional charity work. These things certainly indicate that some of the pioneers willingly worked and sacrificed for something else than the mere conquest of the soil and the accumulation of wealth. Most of the churches and institutions that they established still remain and are ours today. But such institutions do not exist for their own sake. Looking at ourselves and trying to evaluate what the church and her institutions have meant to us, and to what extent they are a true expression of our spiritual life, we are led to consider, How did the in-

ner life of the pioneer church members express itself in the congregational life and the activity of the church in general?

We must remember that the pioneers of the Minnesota Conference brought their spiritual environment with them from abroad. The first expression of their spiritual life here was determined by what they had learned in the old homeland. They had the Bible, the Catechism, the Psalm book, perhaps a postil containing some of Luther's sermons, or the sermons of Johann Arndt, and maybe some copies of *Pietisten*, with the writings of C. O. Rosenius. In some homes daily reading of the Bible and Psalm book was a regular rule. On Sundays the people met at one of the cabins or outdoors, when someone of the group led in a simple worship of song, prayer, and the reading of a sermon.

But we make a great mistake if we imagine that this life of piety was always and everywhere in evidence. To some, religion had always been mostly a matter of form, and now the old familiar forms had been left behind in Sweden. To those who were inclined to a worldly life, the freedom of the frontier offered special opportunities. Drinking and dancing were common in many communities. In Sweden liquor was manufactured on almost every farm, and it was not to be expected that all the immigrants were total abstainers. At least one of the pioneer pastors in Minnesota was invited by one of his deacons to come over and join them in a little drinking and card playing. On the whole, the Swedish immigrants were law-abiding people, but serious sins of

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Liturgical Freedom

As to the order of service for the public worship, it should be essentially in accord with the Swedish Handbook, except that in case the officiating minister so desires he may use a free prayer for the confession of sins; instead of the regular epistle he may read a chapter from the Old Testament or from the letters of the apostles, after which the Apostles' Creed should be read. The pastor may choose the sermon text according to his own desire except on the festival days, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost. These days should be kept according to their significance and therefore we should retain the texts. Other holidays observed during the week in Sweden are free, and services may be held or not held, according to opportunity and desire.

T. N. Hasselquist, editorial article in *Hemlandet*, May 1, 1856.

immorality were reported in various places, even bigamy and incest. The problem of church discipline in some of these cases was extremely difficult, especially since the people had never been accustomed to discipline on evangelical principles. In Sweden church discipline was exercised by state law and enforced by the sheriff.

Congregational meetings were not always perfect examples of orderliness and Christian decorum. Parliamentary rules, if they were known at all, were often disregarded. Some of the men did not see why they had to wait for recognition by the chairman before speaking in a gathering of neighbors in somebody's log cabin, or even in church, for that matter. One pastor was threatened with a church member's fist in his face while trying to conduct an orderly business session. Special meetings were very frequent in the early times. In one place eight meetings were held in one year. No business of importance was intrusted to the church board.

Church services were often scenes of disorder caused by trouble makers. One church even found it necessary to report all such offenders to the police. On the other hand, there were those who had such deep respect for the church and the ministry that even the primitive frontier conditions could not shake it. Norelius tells a story from his first summer in Chisago Lake, when he, as a twenty-year-old student served the new congregation. One day he was walking home, dressed in overalls, and at a narrow bridge across a stream he met Gustaf Collin, a pious and true Christian who had the highest regard for the man of the cloth, even when "the cloth" was blue denim. Stepping aside and bowing humbly he yielded the right-of-way to "Magister." This was not mock seriousness on his part, but was done in all sincerity. The incongruity of the whole thing reacted on the young and democratic Norelius so that he said it removed from his mind for ever all thought of acting the aristocrat.

Aside from the business of adopting a constitution, electing a church board, and arranging for pastoral services, the first matter that usually presented itself to a newly organized congregation was to build some sort of house in which to meet for services. Most of the pioneer church buildings were extremely primitive. Nothing else was to be expected. The people were poor, and they had to build the church of such material as they found on their own land. A few windows had to be bought, and a few pieces of simple hardware. In a few years the little log cabin church would be found too small, and by that time they

could afford a frame building. The first brick churches in the Minnesota Conference were the East Union and Red Wing churches, built in 1866, and the one at Vasa, built in 1869.

Where to locate the church was often a cause of struggle and dissension. In communities where the settlers were scattered over an area twelve or fifteen miles wide, it was no easy matter to find a site suitable to all, especially since the pioneer settlements were in a state of flux and no one knew what direction the course of new immigration might take. Usually the pastor was caught in between the contending factions and would need all the Christian tact and foresight that a mortal man could muster. Once in a while the contention would result in a division of the congregation and the erection of two churches a few miles apart. Some of the ancient breaches have not yet been healed.

One of the chief characteristics of congregational life as we know it today is the multiplicity of organizations, the Ladies' Aid, Luther League, Brotherhood, ad infinitum. Prior to 1875 such organizations were almost unknown in the churches of the Minnesota Conference, or if any existed, no records have been preserved to tell the story. The Mooers Prairie congregation had a ladies' society as early as 1870, and First Church, St. Paul, had a "Sewing Society" in the 'seventies. These are the earliest ones of their kind, as far as the author of this volume has been able to discover. Not until the 'eighties do we find much about Ladies' Aids and Young People's societies. However, it is very likely that groups of women met to work for the church even in pioneer times, though there was no formal organization and no records were kept. Woman suffrage in the church, as in the nation, was not to become a reality until half a century later, but there is evidence here and there in the early history of some congregations, that women took a very active part in the promotion of the work of the church. Sometimes women took the lead in getting a pastor to come and organize a congregation. In one place, at least, a woman was permitted freely to speak at religious gatherings in the homes and in church, and she was largely instrumental in bringing about a religious awakening.

That there could or should be special organizations for the young people evidently never entered the minds of the pioneer church members. Yet it can be said that the first specialized congregational activity was in nearly every instance an activity for the youth of the church—a confirmation class. In some places Sunday school or week day church

school was begun shortly after the congregation had been established. Even where this was not done at once, it was customary to begin catechetical instruction as soon as arrangements could be made for it. Occasionally we find that five or ten years elapsed before any regular Sunday school was attempted. However, in certain pioneer settlements the church school was in existence before any public school was established.

Teaching materials were scarce, and usually consisted of Catechism and Bible History. For the beginners there was the A-B-C Book. At first these books were imported from Sweden. The Publication Society of the Mississippi Conference in Chicago began the work of providing American editions of the old Swedish books. In 1862 a new edition of the A-B-C Book was under consideration. The Minnesota Conference sent a request that some of the reading lessons might be omitted and that The Lord's Prayer, the Articles of Faith, and the Ten Commandments be included instead "to make the book more dear to our people."

Various editions of the Catechism were in use, as is evidenced by the fact that the Conference in 1862 expressed the hope for uniformity in this matter and requested the Synod to arrange for publication of a Catechism and Bible History together in one volume.

A "Hand book for the Sunday School, with suitable psalms and hymns" was published in 1865. Norelius was the editor and compiler. The little book contains seventeen hymns, including "Jesus, Lord and Precious Saviour," "A Mighty Fortress," "Praise the Saviour," and others. A complete Order for Sunday School is given, which is as follows:

The Superintendent: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

A hymn is sung.

The Superintendent: Let us hear God's Commandments.

The Children repeat the Commandments in unison.

The Superintendent: What does God declare concerning all these Commandments?

The Children: He says: I, the Lord thy God, etc.

The Superintendent: Let us hear the gospel.

The Children: (Joh. 3.16; Romans 6. 4, 5; and Matthew 11.28-30).

The Superintendent: Let us confess our Christian faith.

The Sunday school repeats the articles of the Creed.

The Superintendent: Let us pray.

All kneel and the Superintendent offers a free prayer or one of the three prayers printed in the book.

Roll Call. Absent children are noted and new pupils are announced and enrolled.

Then each teacher takes charge of his class and the instruction begins. This continues one hour, or at the most, one hour and fifteen minutes. Small children who have not yet learned to read, are enrolled in one class taught by a capable person in such a manner that a Bible or Bible History with pictures is shown to them, and a simple explanation is given.

The instruction in each class is to be conducted thus:

1. The lessons in Catechism and Bible History are read from memory and the teacher asks questions to see if the children understand what they have read.
2. Each class reads a chapter or a part of a chapter from the Bible, which is then explained in a simple way and applied to the children.
3. If there is a Bible class for older children and adults the Superintendent may conduct this according to his own best insight, so that

* * *

School Amid Difficulties

"In the latter part of February or the first part of March 1857 the school term ended [at Marine]. . . . Shortly before it ended a man by the name of Porter from the neighboring settlement of Chisago Lake came and asked me to come and teach school, and this I gladly promised to do. . . . For two years I continued my school work winter and summer except for some short vacations. The school was held in the homes of those who had children enrolled. Everywhere the houses were small and crowded. Many of these little houses had only one room, which served as living room, kitchen, cellar, bed room and school room.

"I always went to hear Pastor Cederstam's sermons, and claimed to be a genuine Lutheran although I scarcely knew our Lutheran doctrine even as to the letter of it. His sermons were undoubtedly good, but I held with many of the people who only criticized them. Many were angry at the pastor, especially the young people who were greatly annoyed because he disapproved of their dancing and carousing."

Lars Anderson, Ms. in Augustana College Archives, Rock Island, Illinois.

the meaning of the Word of God not only be made clear but also applied to the hearts of the readers.

4. The Superintendent gives a short address to the entire Sunday school, whereby some portion of the Catechism or the Bible History is set forth, and the truth of God's Word, whenever possible, be illustrated and affirmed by some interesting story.

When the hour is drawing to its close the Superintendent says: Let us thank and praise the Lord.

The Sunday school rising, sings:

Glory be to Thee, O Lord

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

or:

Hosanna, or some other song of praise.

The Superintendent: Let us pray.

All kneel and join in praying the Lord's prayer and the benediction.

Then a closing song is sung, which may sometimes be done by having the boys and the girls sing alternate stanzas. The teachers should see that the children leave quietly.

Where all these instructions were followed conscientiously the children undoubtedly receive good Christian training.

The question of parochial school was broached in most of the pioneer churches, and attempts were made to establish such schools in a few places. However, these plans seldom materialized because of the expense, and the difficulty of getting teachers. The public school came in to fill the need of common education. The Christian weekday school became a summer term of a month or two, sometimes more, conducted in the Swedish language and usually called "Swede school." The Catechism, Bible History, New Testament, and hymn singing were the principal parts of the curriculum, but it also included Swedish reading, grammar, and spelling. After 1862 students from St. Ansgar's Academy, both men and women, served as teachers, but the supply was never equal to the demand.

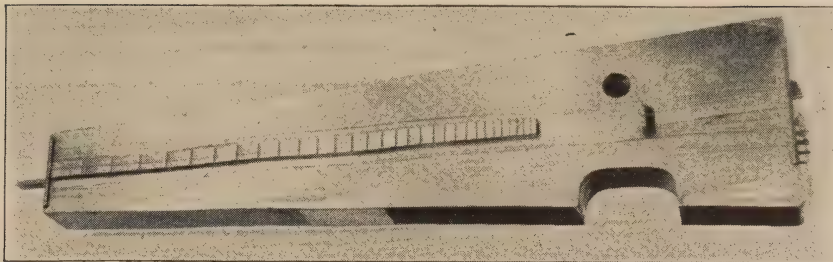
The need of using English in the work of the church was recognized from the beginning by a few people, both pastors and laymen, but this development was slow in coming, especially in the rural areas where the people were almost exclusively Swedish immigrants. Many parents discouraged their children from using the English language except where absolutely necessary. To them it was the vulgar language of the street, not fit for the church or the home. However, they soon

found uses for such words as claim, acre, frame, deed, mortgage, in their discussion of church affairs, and we see these words repeatedly in congregational and Conference minutes from pioneer times. Gradually the language of the Swedish communities became a ludicrous mixture of dialect Swedish and broken English which was hard to understand except for those who were brought up with it.

The first visit of a pastor to a new settlement was a red letter day. If the people knew in advance that a minister was coming, preparations were made for services. Otherwise his arrival would be the signal for the sending of messages to the neighbors, calling them to a service, perhaps the same evening. They came, walking, often barefoot, several miles, carrying the younger children, bringing for baptism those born since they left Sweden. Eagerly they listened to the sermons, though they were long. Just as eagerly they listened afterwards to his items of news about other communities, the new settlements in other parts of the state, and the "old" settlements that had already been in existence for five or ten years. The progress of the church would be discussed, and they would want to talk about the possibility of getting a church in their own community.

Of course it was not always a Lutheran pastor who was first to visit the new settlement. He might be a Baptist or a Methodist, or a fly-by-night self-appointed minister. Then the minds and souls of people were disturbed. Endless arguments were the order of the day, and sometimes these resulted in dissension. The pious and earnest ones searched the Scriptures and tried to convince others, but sometimes even the pious ones had difficulty with the theological problems that arose. Consequently many communities became divided religiously, and congregations of various faiths were established, often resulting in unseemly rivalry. Among the Lutherans there was not always perfect unanimity in the religious attitudes. Some were extremely pietistic and puritanical, others more evangelical.

Gradually, as the services became more regular and the church affairs took on a semblance of order, the religious life of the individual member also became more settled. The meaning of a free church in a country such as this slowly began to dawn upon them. Those who had no use for the church but who joined merely because they had been baptized and confirmed in Sweden, now began to drop out. The sincere and zealous ones came to see that church membership implied personal responsibility. They learned to labor and to sacrifice for the church.



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Psalmodikon

No 2.

D + 2 + 3 + 6 + 7.

| 0 8 | 8 8 | 5 7 | 8 6 | 5 |
| 0 3 | 3 3 | 2 5 | 3X4 | 5 |

Får Gud är öf en wåldig berg,
På Sonen, i all nöd och förg,

| 0 5 | 5 5 | 5 5 | 6 6 | 7 |

| 0 1 | 1 1 | 7 3 | 6 2 | 5 |

| 0 8 | 7 6 | 5 6 | 43,2 | 1 :||

| 0 3 | 3 1 | 3 3 | 2117 | 1 :||

Han är vårt wapen trög.....ga;
Vårt hopp wi wilje byg.....ga

| 0 6 | 5 6 | 8 8 | 6565 | 3 :||

| 0 6 | 3 4 | 1 6 | 2345 | 1 :||

| 1 *3 | 5 6 | 5X4 | 5 |

| 1 1 | 2 3 | 7 2 | 2

Mårtens förste stiger ned,

| 5 5 | 5 3 | 5 6 | 7 |

| 3 1 | 7 1 | 3 2 | 5 |

PHOTO COURTESY GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

A Page from a Sunday school song book published in 1865, showing psalmodikon music for "A Mighty Fortress is our God."

Since Conference meetings were held three times a year, the larger congregations had an opportunity to serve as hosts to such a gathering once every two or three years in the early days. These were festive occasions. There would be four or five pastors in attendance, and ten or twelve lay delegates. Services would be held every afternoon or evening, and two or three times on Sunday. Discussions would be held one or two afternoons, with clergy and laity taking part. Some of the topics were: "Should children of non-members be baptized?" "Should parents be allowed to remain as members of the church if they do not want to train their children according to our evangelical doctrine?" "Church discipline"; "Temperance"; "A Christian attitude in time of war."

Beginning in 1870 district meetings were instituted. The pastors of a district were expected to meet once a month, in such a way that every parish would have a meeting once a year. The gatherings usually lasted

two or three days, and in most places the people declared a holiday and came to church. The lay people as well as the pastors participated in the discussion of questions about conversion, the nature of the church, absolution, etc. Such occasions provided opportunities for instruction and for evangelistic emphasis, and helped to strengthen the interest in the general work of the church. The old time district meetings were a source of spiritual quickening in the Minnesota Conference.



PHOTO COURTESY
CHISAGO LAKE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Peter Shaleen, Organist in Chisago Lake Church 1856-1898.

Singing was a part of the church worship of the pioneers from the very beginning. Generally there was no musical instrument the first years, but someone would be appointed to serve as cantor, to lead the congregational singing. The first instrument in many of the congregations was the psalmodikon. This instrument was invented by a minister in Sweden, in the parish from which L. P. Esbjörn came. Some of the instruments consisted of only one string on a simple sounding box. The better ones had as many as ten strings, but only one string was played, the others serving for amplification of the tones. It was played with a bow. Eric Norelius introduced the instrument in Minnesota and encouraged its use.

Reed organs began to make their appearance in some of the congregations in the 'sixties. Undoubtedly the first pipe organ in a church of the Minnesota Conference was the one brought from Sweden in 1870 by R. O. Mattson and donated by him to the church at Tripolis. His ancestors for several generations had been organists and he served as organist of the Tripolis church for twenty-three years. The Chisago Lake Church bought its first pipe organ in 1871.

Congregational singing in pioneer times was sometimes so bad as to be painful to those with an ear for music. Norelius once wrote an article for *Hemlandet* in which he lamented the singing in a Minnesota congregation. A reply from the pastor explained that the people

were all so inspired that day by Norelius' presence that they all sang whether they knew the melody or not.

Choir singing was not thought of in the early pioneer times, but probably had its beginning in the 'sixties. It is known that Rev. John Nilson organized a choir in Watertown in 1870, and First Lutheran Church, St. Paul, had a choir in 1872, while Rev. J. Auslund was pastor there. The same year, under C. A. Evald's pastorate, Augustana Church, Minneapolis, voted to have a song leader to train the Sunday school children in music.

The mid-week service, generally in the form of a prayer meeting, became a significant part of the church program in many congregations. It gave the lay people opportunities for taking part in prayer and Bible discussions. Though at times it may have been a sounding board for piosity, there can be no minimizing of the great value of this activity in the early years. Many a Christian has counted his religious conversion as having its origin in one of those prayer meetings.

Secular organizations tried at times to add prestige to their own activities by seeking to have the church sponsor or approve their affairs. In one city a Swedish Library Association had come into existence. To raise money for the cause one of the leaders prepared a lecture on "Scandinavians as American Citizens," and asked permission to give it in the church (though the lecturer himself usually went out to study nature on Sundays). But, according to his own statement "The Swedish Lutheran Church in this place was not sufficiently enlightened to be had for any intellectual purpose whatever."

One congregation adopted resolutions forbidding the distribution of political papers in church. The only public question on which the Conference declared itself was the liquor problem. Generally speaking, the churches studiously avoided political entanglements.

There is evidence that the Fourth of July was sometimes the occasion for church celebrations. A notable one was the festive day in Vasa on July 4, 1866, when Norelius had arranged a gathering for the purpose of organizing a Goodhue County Mission Society. People came in great numbers from all the congregations in the county and from Wisconsin. A program was given in the church in the forenoon. The speaker (evidently Norelius himself) dwelt on the great heritage handed down from the founders of the republic. Now slavery had been abolished, making America more truly a free country. What is the real basis of our country's freedom? How shall it be maintained and pre-

served? Not by great armies, not by a few individual statesmen here and there, but by true godliness and high moral standards among all the people. This must come through the preaching of the Word and the teaching of the Bible doctrines. Following a picnic dinner and a social hour, another meeting was held at which a County Mission Society was organized, to work for home and foreign missions and for the care of the homeless and the friendless.

America was looked upon as the "land of Canaan" when the immigrants set out from the homeland. Many of them imagined that the dollars grew on bushes. Even those who expected to work for their money did not quite realize how difficult life would be at times. They had not counted on financial depression, war, Indian massacres, grasshoppers and the various unfavorable circumstances that might affect individual persons and families, such as sickness, accident, fires, and other private or public calamities.

The hardships of pioneer life affected the souls of men in different ways. To some it seemed as a punishment for having left their home and their fatherland. To others it was a test of faith and a means of bringing them to lean more heavily on the Lord and not on their own understanding. One pastor mentioned that the 1857 panic hindered the outward development of the congregation, but the Word of God seemed to have greater effect on the people. There is no doubt but that

1 1 1

Key of Bee

I must also say something about the congregational singing, and I believe I could say it with equal truthfulness about our countrymen at many other places in America. At one meeting it was especially remarkable. I sang in my way according to Dillner's psalmodikon; the cantor, right by my side, sang in his way, according to what chorale I do not know; one woman near the door sang louder than anyone else and led some of her neighbor women; a man on the other side of the door sang and made melody with a large number of his sex; and outside the building I heard song and endless music, of how many different sorts I know not. Well, all this put together sounded strange, as anyone can imagine. There was such music that the like of it has never been heard in any beehive.

Eric Norelius, Letter published in *Hemlandet*, December 1, 1855.

the pioneer hardships brought to the people a sense of their need of cooperation. The spirit of self-sacrifice was developed. Again and again we find that "their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality," especially when they heard of brethren in the faith who were suffering from the ravages of Indians or grasshoppers. The frontier had a levelling influence. There was a feeling of social equality such as they had not known in Sweden. If anyone tried to assume an aristocratic air or insist on titles, he was soon taken care of.

As the farmer's fields began to widen in expanse, as the primitive log shack gave place to a frame dwelling, as money became a little more plentiful and small luxuries began to appear in the home, a new temptation arose which affected individuals and communities. It was the temptation to measure progress by an economic standard. The new team of horses, the new plow or reaper, the new house, the new clearing in the woods, the big crop of wheat, all this was to the pioneer a source of satisfaction. America was really wonderful, after all! The hardships were soon forgotten in the exhilarating experience of success and progress. But, lurking very close at hand was the devil of materialism and secularism. There was a danger that even the progress of the church would be judged by its advancement in material ways. This danger was intensified by the local pride and community rivalry so prevalent in the era of rapid growth. The sinister blight of self-satisfaction spread in the post-pioneer days and caused more damage than we yet are willing to admit.

There is a kind of individualism which is almost purely an expression of selfishness. What a man sows, that shall he also reap, and where the selfish individualist has sown his materialistic philosophy we can see the harvest, sometimes even to the third and fourth generation. The pioneers did not always foresee this. They asked of their government freedom to work out their own economic security. A fine American frontier ideal! But some of the descendants of those pioneers ask their government for economic security so they can have freedom to live as they please. On the other hand, there is a Christian individualism which expresses itself in a free recognition of the rights, the abilities, and the personal worth of one's fellowmen. Such individualists can be just as resourceful as the selfish ones, but they use their resourcefulness in voluntary cooperation with neighbors in the establishment of a better life for all through democratic institutions and a free church.

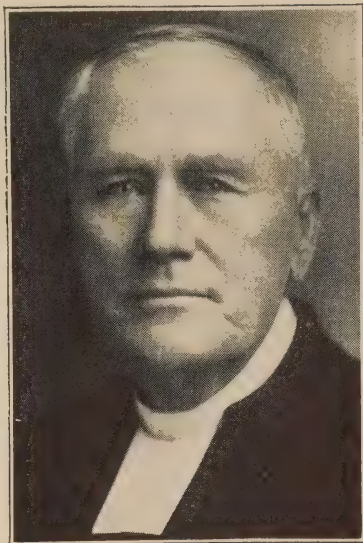
The secularism and materialism which blighted some families and

entire communities, is of course only one part of the picture. This blight did not kill the true spirit of the church. The real character of the Minnesota Conference was not determined by the rough and rowdy element that refused to respect church discipline or self-discipline, nor was it determined by the men whose chief interest was their own fortunes. Reading the story of the pioneer churches one is soon impressed by the fact that, in spite of all human weakness and perversity, there was a living Christianity among those people. There were hundreds, yes thousands of men and women who were strong in faith, sincere in their piety, and zealous in their love for the Church. They were, as a rule, unlearned people, and occasionally one detects a bit of superstition in their mental makeup, an inheritance from past generations which peopled every mysterious nook with half a score of trolls. But this belief soon wore off in America, and the serious faith of the pietists blossomed forth into an all-embracing Christianity. Instead of trying to separate religion from life, as some do, they sought to see all of their daily experiences in relation to God. Daily food, health and sickness, crops and weather, cattle and horses, neighbors and relatives, as well as the church, the pastor, the education of the children—all these things and many more were fit topics for prayer. It was not without reason that the pietists in Sweden were called *läsare* (readers). They read the Bible and their devotional books. They continued to do this in America. There was very little fanatical emotionalism among them, although many of them must have witnessed in Sweden the strange religious phenomenon generally called the “preaching sickness.” (In the religious awakenings in various communities in Sweden it often happened that young people, even children, were suddenly overcome by an uncontrollable urge to preach, especially to warn others of their sins and the impending doom that threatened them unless they would repent. These manifestations often had a powerful effect on the listeners, and were usually looked upon as a means used by God to lead sinners to conversion. There is no evidence, as far as the present writer knows, that this “preaching sickness” ever occurred among the immigrants here in this country.)

During the first twenty-five years of the existence of the Minnesota Conference, every pastor was a native of Sweden or Norway. (The first American-born pastor to serve in the Conference was Rev. John P. Leaf, born at Andover, Illinois, in 1859, ordained 1883 on a call to the Maple Ridge parish, (Dalbo) Isanti county, Minnesota.) However,



PHOTO FROM VASA ILLUSTRATA,
COURTESY VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH



COURTESY AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

Rev. P. J. Swärd, called from Sweden 1875 to become assistant pastor in Vasa, later served as pastor there and in other parishes. He was President of the Augustana Synod 1891-99.

Rev. J. P. Leaf, First American Born Pastor in the Minnesota Conference.

it is significant to note that of the seventy-two pastors who served in the Minnesota Conference for longer or shorter periods between 1858 and 1883, only two were ordained in Sweden. One of these was P. J. Swärd, who became assistant pastor at Vasa in 1879, and who later became president of the Synod.

There is good reason for the statement that the establishment of the Minnesota Conference was largely a laymen's movement. Most of the men ordained for service in Minnesota began as lay preachers in their own congregation and community. And in spite of the fact that the pastors as well as the great majority of members were Swedish-born, it was an American movement. They had a spiritual heritage from the old country, but the planting of the church on the soil of America was a part of the great task of conquering the wilderness. The methods and technique were typically American. Most of the pastors had a very meager training for the ministry. But from the humble homes of

serious-minded frontier settlers young men came at the urgent plea of the church to take up the task of proclaiming the gospel. They saw that Sweden had no intention of giving help for the task. Indeed, there were times when Sweden made the task more difficult. The brunt of the responsibility rested upon men like Cederstam, Beckman, Magny, Norelius, Nilson, and the others whose names are mentioned here and there in this book. They were not giants of intellect, nor were they famous orators. In the greatest simplicity they went from house to house, from settlement to settlement, and the success that followed can be explained only in these words: God blessed their efforts and made their labors fruitful.

The Unity of the Spirit

Among our pastors in Minnesota a fine brotherliness and equality have always prevailed. No one has been a head taller than the others, and therefore they all have become blended together as one, so that it has been a joy to behold it. There are differences, to be sure; but so far the Lord has granted them grace to be of one mind and of one Spirit, and therefore it has been good to see the fulfillment of the words of the Psalmist: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

So said Eric Norelius in an article published in *Augustana* in 1874. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his words. There seems to have been no serious dissension among the pastors of the Conference in pioneer times, though they were engaged in tasks that could easily arouse differences of opinion. There were various kinds of personalities and different background and training. There was the strict, serious schoolmaster Jackson; the hesitant, self-effacing Cederstam; the venturesome, energetic, pioneering, humor-loving Norelius; the fervent yet patient Auslund; the active, practical-minded Peter Carlson; the deep-thinking Hedengran; the strong and brilliant parliamentarian Sjöblom; the tireless traveller Jonas Magny; the musician and nature-lover John H. Nilson; and the others, all different. They had a common language, and a common national origin. But human nature being what it is, language and nationality are not sufficient for the fusion of many such differing personalities into a unified whole, working together harmoniously through years of self-sacrifice and hardship. Swedes are proverbially jealous of one another. The Swedish language is not in itself a guarantee of unity. It can be the means of communicating ill will and mistrust. But when there is spiritual fellowship and harmony, then a common language and national origin become strong links in the chain of unity.

That there was a high degree of brotherly unity among the pioneer pastors seems evident from the records. No one seemed to have any undue ambitions to lord it over the others. There seems to be no evidence of political intrigues by any group or clique. No lurking suspi-

cions marred the frankness and good fellowship. They met and worked together in a spirit of mutual confidence and cooperation, willing to recognize one another's gifts and to forgive and overlook one another's failings.

The unity among the pastors was an essential factor in the establishment, growth, and solidarity of the Conference. This was especially evident in the early pioneer times when means of communication were meager and slow. Settlers in the St. Croix Valley had little opportunity for personal contact with their countrymen in the Minnesota Valley or in Goodhue county. They all soon learned to know Norelius, Cederstam, Carlson, Beckman, and Boren, as they visited each and every settlement and spoke of what they had seen and heard in the other settlements. These reports told of something else than the number of new settlers who had arrived, and what sort of land they had. There were reports about religious conditions. Gradually they came to feel a unity of faith with people whom they had never seen. Because of their confidence in the genuineness of the faith that existed in the hearts of the pastors, the people were willing to establish a Conference and work together with one another in friendly understanding.

The continued unity of the Conference was not dependent so much upon legal forms and the outward evidences of organization as upon the feeling of mutual trust and fellowship in the faith. For ten years, from 1861 to 1871, the Minnesota Conference constitution was missing, and it seems that no one missed it! The pastors and lay delegates met three times a year (except 1862 when they met two times) and transacted Conference business. They met in unity of faith and purpose, trusting one another, accepting committee assignments, fulfilling their duties, accounting for funds intrusted to them.

Such harmony and cooperation did not just happen. It was not just a matter of nationality, for even among Swedes there are provincial and religious differences. The Swedish immigrants were all pretty good at remembering which province they came from, and sometimes they enlarged unduly upon these matters. The Skåning and the Helsing seemed to be poles apart, the former from the rich fertile plain of southern Sweden, the latter from the melancholy forests of the north. The Östgöt liked to snicker at the monotonous Dalmas dialect, and the customs and costumes of the Dal people were regarded as curiosities by all other Swedes. The man from Västergötland was a knalle (peddler) in the eyes of everybody else. The Smålänning bragged that

Småland had furnished more ministers than any other province, and the Värmlänning would retort "That's why we have so many poor preachers."

Although much of this was merely good-natured banter, it cannot be denied that the provincialism was strong in many places. It has persisted in some instances even among the American-born children and grandchildren of the immigrants. In places where most of the settlers were from one province, it might be difficult for a family from another province to enter the inner circle of the community and the congregation. Gradually, however, the levelling influence of pioneering and the process of Americanization, and most of all, the unity of the faith, erased the worst features of provincialism. But one does not need to be an expert in Swedish dialects to be able to detect, even today, where some people's ancestors came from.

There were also different religious tendencies among the immigrants. Some had given up the Lutheran faith. But even among the Lutherans there were differences. They were not all of the *läsare* type. There were many who had a wholesome and serious respect for the church and for the minister, and gladly participated in the support of the church, yet they seemed to lack the hearty piety of the *läsare*. Some were rather legalistic and were probably inclined to judge others somewhat harshly. In some cases, of course, religion was a matter of form and not much else.

Norelius often expressed the wish that the Swedish immigrants would settle together in compact colonies so they could form strong congregations. He did what he could to bring this about, but neither he nor anyone else could do much about it. The settlements were scattered far apart, as we have seen. In 1875 the Conference included congregations in twenty-nine counties in Minnesota, six counties in Wisconsin, and two counties in Dakota Territory. Geographically the Conference could hardly be considered a well-knit entity. We must rather say that the forces and influences which sent the settlers out to every new frontier had the tendency to dissolve the old bonds which had held the Swedish Lutheran immigrants together as a people. Local pride, state boundaries, Swedish provincialism, different religious tendencies, distance and lack of means of communication, all these factors were divisive influences that tended to retard the growth and to weaken the solidarity of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference.

In spite of these unfavorable circumstances and tendencies, more

than one hundred congregations were established by the Conference before the end of 1875, with a baptized membership of more than 18,000. We heartily agree with Eric Norelius in the statement he made when he reviewed the growth and the unity of the Conference in 1874. He said: "This has been accomplished by the Word of God."

Lutherans believe, as Luther has said in his Catechism, that the Holy Spirit *calls* through the gospel, *gathers* the Christian Church and *preserves* it in union with Jesus Christ. We believe that in the midst of all disunity and divisive tendencies in the world there is a divine power that draws people together in the unity of the Spirit. It is the author's sincere hope that the present volume will help to strengthen that belief.

1 1 1

May the Lord Jesus
Christ by his word and Spirit
lead us at last to meet with
joy at the beautiful shore of
"Heaven".

Ay, let us meet there!!

Yours in Christian love

Andr. Jackson

COURTESY WILLMAR TRIBUNE

*Closing Lines of Rev. Jackson's Greeting to the Old Settlers'
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